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# Bitter Sweet

WESTERN MAINE  
PERSPECTIVES

MARCH NINETEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-ONE

VOLUME FOUR, NUMBER THREE

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Spring Skiing

•

The Fireman's  
Ordeal

•

The Shaw Sisters of  
South Paris

•

"The Gift of Eggs"  
a Story of the Finns

•

Solar House in  
Windham

•

Indoor Sports

•

They Called Him  
"Shavey"

•

Harrison's  
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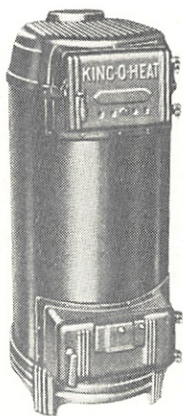
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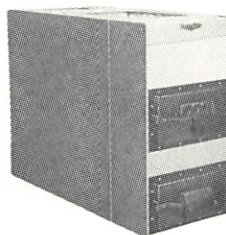
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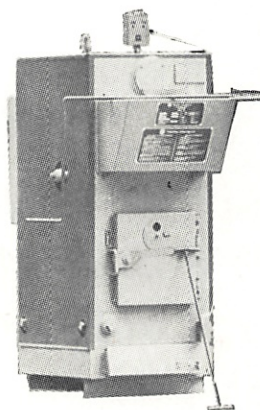
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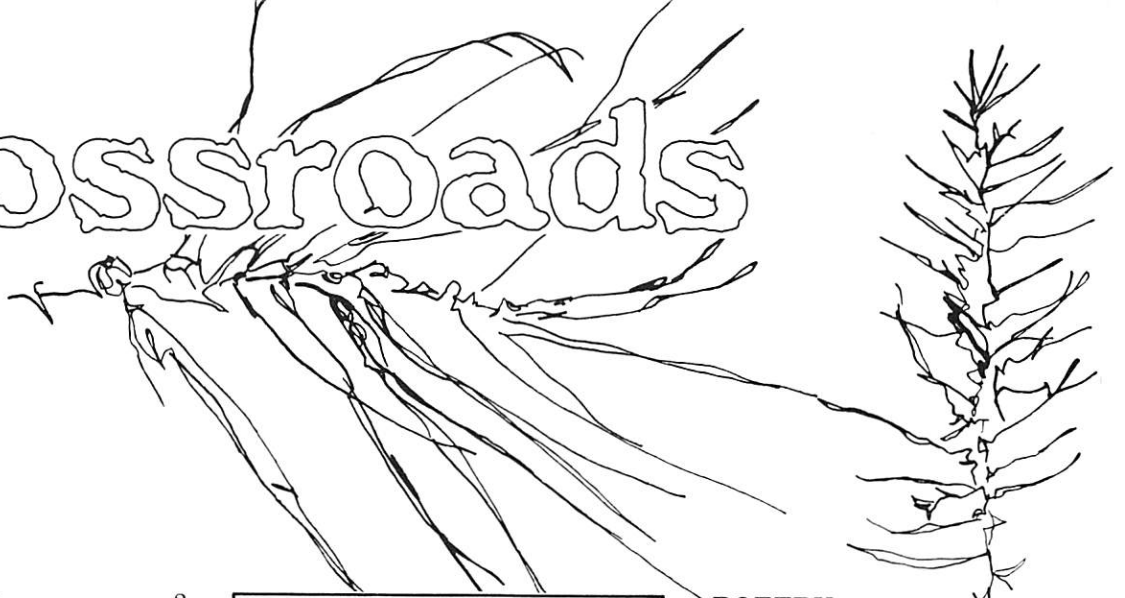


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<b>BitterSweet Views</b> .....	2
<b>Tales of Spring Skiing</b> by Al Wescott .....	3
<b>Food For Thought</b> by Lucia Owen .....	5
<b>The Shaw Sisters of South Paris</b> Marguerite .....	6
Reta by D. W. Merrill .....	7
<b>Elsie Spaulding, Telephone Lady</b> by Mary Thomes Carlson .....	9
<b>Ayah</b> .....	10
<b>Indoor Sports</b> .....	11
<b>We Called Him Shavey</b> by Harry Walker .....	13
<b>The Solar Home</b> by Nancy Marcotte .....	16
<b>Homemade: Doughnuts</b> by Lucretia Douglas .....	19
<b>The Gift of Eggs</b> Fiction by Rebecca Cummings .....	20
<b>Notes From Brookfield Farm</b> by Jack Barnes .....	22
<b>Come, Sit Under My Apple Tree</b> by T. Jewell Collins .....	23
<b>The Sentinel</b> by Jim Keil .....	25
<b>Medicine For The Hills: Allegory</b> by Dr. Michael Lacombe .....	27
<b>Jay's Journal</b> by Jay Burns .....	28
<b>Off The Shelf: A review of</b> <b>New England Gothic/Thunder</b> <b>Over South Parish</b> by Wini Drag .....	30
<b>You Don't Say</b> .....	31
<b>Goings On</b> .....	32
<b>Can You Place It?</b> .....	32

## Bitter Sweet

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**Subscription Inquiries:** Write above address. **Rates:** U. S. Territory and Possessions: \$8/one year. Canadian and foreign addresses: \$10/one year. Newsstands: 75¢/copy; \$1.25/double issue. All back issues that are still available: \$1.00 each at the office; \$1.50 each if mailed.

**Contributions:** We encourage the submission of manuscripts, artwork & photography. We ask that all the material be from local contributors or of local interest. Please submit to **The Editor, BitterSweet**, at the above address. We will return your material if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. You will be notified only if your work is *not* considered for a future publication. **BitterSweet** cannot be held responsible for unsolicited material.

**Payment Schedule:** \$20/major article; \$10/5 all other contributions, depending upon use.

**BitterSweet** is published ten times annually. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. by Western Maine Graphics, Inc. Typeface is Schoolbook.

**Editorial Closing:** Six weeks prior to publication (the first of each month). **Advertising Deadline:** One month prior to publication.

## POETRY

**Signs of Spring**  
by Ruth Pitts ..... 32

**Absolution**  
by Otta Louise Chase ..... 2

**First Steps**  
by Judith Firth-Kaber ..... 8

**Tracks**  
by Shepard Collins ..... 24

**One Saturday Night**  
by C. W. Herrick ..... insert

**Grandpop's Spring Song**  
by Doris Thurston ..... insert

## CREDITS

**Illustrations:** Phoebe Levine, pg. 1; Paula Hutchinson, pg. 21; George Noyes, ppg. 13 & 15, from the collection of Harry Walker. **Photos:** Al Wescott, ppg. 3 & 4; "Picnic" photo by Van Pelt for Columbia Pictures, pg. 8; George Morris Agency, Los Angeles, pg. 7; publicity photo courtesy Marguerite Shaw, pg. 6; Indoor Sports photos John Wilhoite and Judith Berg, pg. 11; Tom Stockwell and N. Marcotte, pg. 12; Bill Haynes, pg. 9; Sawyer, pg. 23; Collins, pg. 24; Nancy Marcotte, ppg. 17 & 18. **Cover Photo:** Mt. Abram.

Many thanks to Westbrook College's collection of Maine Women in the Theatre for loan of pictures on the Shaw sisters; and to Dorothy Healy who is putting in many hours in the development of an archives for both Maine Women in the Theatre and Maine Women Writers. Also, our great appreciation to Marguerite Shaw for loan of her invaluable photos, clippings and papers.

## BitterSweet Views

You may be receiving **BitterSweet** for the first time. You may never have seen it before. This month marks the premiere issue of the "new" **BitterSweet** and to really pass that information along we are sending out a complimentary copy to many, many people. If you've received one, take a good look at it. We think you'll find something to interest everyone in its pages. You will also find a subscription form in the insert, should you care to have the magazine continue to be mailed to you. If you're not interested, please pass it along to someone who might be. Put it in a busy waiting room or on a counter at your favorite restaurant. Spread the word about our magazine.

If you're already an established reader, we hope you will like our new look and find us easy to read. We welcome any comments (our mailing address is Post Office Box 6, Norway, Maine 04268).

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You will also notice a new slogan: "Western Maine Perspectives." It says a lot about looking at people both past and present and into our life here in western Maine. If you have an idea about a story on someone or something from Coburn Gore to Peak's Island, from Mt. Washington to Mt. Katahdin, write it down and send it to us. Don't worry too much about your literary expertise. We'll be glad to read it.

That's exactly where stories in this issue came from—readers who had interesting tales to tell.



### ABSOLUTION

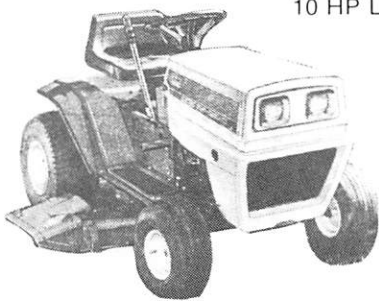
Blow, wind of March, bring snow,  
bring rain,  
Bring drizzle, sleet, then snow  
again:  
No matter how you caterwaul,  
You can't discourage me at all.  
Howl, wind of March, lament  
and wail:  
Your vagaries cannot prevail.  
Our hearts forgive you everything,  
For you blow Winter into Spring.

*Otta Louise Chase*  
from her book **November Violets**  
published by Quill Press

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# Tales of Spring Skiing

by Al Wescott

"Race you to the parking lot," he called as he shoved off over the knoll. The only problem was that the bridge didn't have any snow on it . . .

"See that horizontal band of rocks? Down there through the clouds, off to the left?"

"Yup."

"Good. Ski to the right of it."

"O.K. Why to the right?"

"It's the top of a hundred-foot cliff."

"Oh. How about over to the left?"

"That's the top of a hundred-and-fifty-foot cliff."

"Oh . . ."

So we skied Left Gullet, a *coulloir* in Mt. Washington's Tuckerman's Ravine. (The ravine itself is nearly 1000 feet high, from the floor to the "lip;" it's about three-quarters of a mile wide and shaped like half of a gigantic bowl. Left Gully, on the south end, isn't quite as steep as the "lip" on the north, but it still demands a fair amount of attention. Especially on top of four inches of new, ball-bearing snow . . .)

"Kinda like skiing on a rug after someone pulled it out from under you, huh?"

"Yup."

\*\*\*\*\*

Tuck's is steep. Viewed from the top it can be both physically and mentally intimidating. On the high reaches a skier's upper body is launched out over the slope and his view is nearly straight down the entire drop. For every turn he must retract his heels so that the tails of his skis clear the snow behind him. And for every turn he drops twenty vertical feet.

"Thirty-four seconds," Bill said.

My dislocated shoulder hurt somewhat and I must have had a questioning look on my face.

"Thirty four seconds. I timed it. That's how long it took you to fall off the top."

Bill's alive today because I couldn't use my right arm just then.

\*\*\*\*\*

After the lifts have shut down and the snow on lesser mountains has turned into the runoff that whitewater canoeists and kayakers swim in, diehard skiers congregate in Tuck's. Weather can be a problem, and the snow sometimes changes instantly under the skis. Some folks get addicted to the place and return, year after year.

"Cause they don't know any better," someone once said.

Other people make the trip once, and never return.

"Cause they *do* know better," someone else said.

But no matter what skiers' impressions are, there seems to be one universal truth. "It's like skiing off the edge of the world," one internationally known writer stated.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tales about Tuck's are legion. United States Forest Service snow

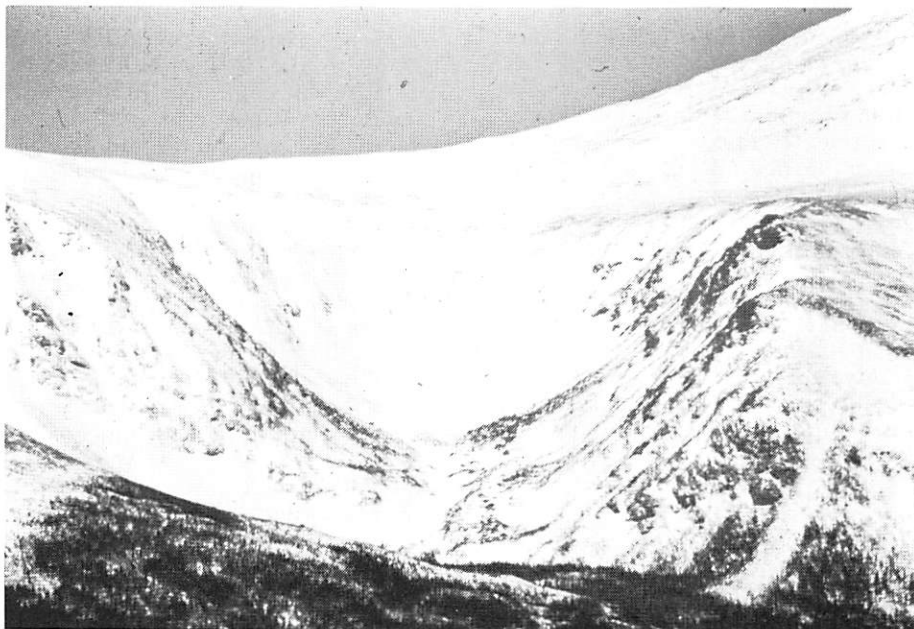
rangers blast ice and snow off the headwall with rifles and pneumatic-cannon-fired explosives. Rudi Wyrsh once skied the Lip wearing a pair of stilts; another chap came down the ravine slightly ahead of a cargo parachute . . . until the 'chute collapsed and he came down the rest of the way on his neck; more than a few people have more-or-less ridden down on snow shovels on a one-way trip to instant vertigo when their bodies went one way and the shovels another.

Toni Matt made a wrong turn at the top of the Headwall during a Mt. Washington Inferno race in the '30's and probably hit speeds of 100 miles-per-hour at the bottom of the ravine.

In 1969 after another Inferno, I came off the Lip the wrong way and slid 700 feet on my nose.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Tuckerman's Ravine on Mt. Washington*





*Looking down into Tuck's—  
skiers visible lower center*

Good skiers used to use long-thongs and turntables. They were great heel bindings; they gave excellent support and the skier could gain instant status among his peers by figuring out a really new and different way to criss-cross the six feet of leather straps around his boots. But they didn't release—ever. The new "safety" bindings had been improved to the point they were reliable and the new plastic boots gave us all the support that was needed.

Well, our first downhill runs using the new bindings and carrying packs taught us a lot—fast. We hadn't thought to tighten down the heel releases to compensate for the added 65 pounds we had on our backs. We'd be cruising along, hit a bump or a compression that would cause a slight deceleration, and BAM!

Unfortunately for Tom, his first such experience occurred when he hit a patch of mud.

"My nose is an inch shorter than it used to be," he claims, "and twenty years later, I'm still picking gravel out of my teeth."

\*\*\*\*\*

Some years ago we had enlisted ourselves in the forefront of the plastics revolution. That is, we had

bought a new type of boot—black, with shiny metal buckles, and made of . . . plastic.

"Japanese rubber discount slippers," folks would say. "They got any support to 'em?"

The first night out with the new boots we had dutifully buckled them closed and shoved them, along with our climbing boots, into the bottoms of the sleeping bags. (Boots left in the tent have a tendency to freeze, leading to cold feet and all sorts of other problems.)

Next morning we found that we could unbuckle the boots easily enough, but that we couldn't open the boots' outer shells wide enough to insert our feet.

"Put 'em next the the fire," Larry suggested. Which was good thinking, except that we didn't have a fire.

"Put 'em in the frypan."

So we started the SVEA stove and gently barbecued the boots. After a period of trial and error we discovered that the plastic of which the outer shells were made became pliable only after the inner liners started to smoke.

"Food for thought, huh?"

"Only when your brains are in your feet."

So much for the day we almost burned down our boots.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bruce was sort of swinging from a tree when I rounded the bend on the J. Sherburne ski trail that leads from Hermit Lake down to Pinkham Notch. He was also making funny sounds with his mouth and jerking his legs, which were still clamped to his skis, in a rather odd fashion.

We'd been skiing and climbing for a few days, using the frozen lake as a tentsite, and had finally run out of food. We'd lashed our ice axes, crampons, and climbing hardware to the backs of our packs and tied our flat-coiled ropes across the tops. We buckled the packs' waist-straps and shoved off on some quick corn snow.

He'd rounded the bend and then been "levitated," he said, when the loops of the coiled rope had snagged an up-sloping branch of a dead pine. Rope, pack, and Bruce were dangling six feet above the snow

and he couldn't get the pack straps unbuckled.

It took me about 20 minutes to cut through the branch with a wire saw.

\*\*\*\*\*

Instead of lashing everything to the packs, which already weighed eighty pounds, we'd decided to make a toboggan out of the skis, put the boots in the bindings, and tie a one-gallon jug of wine to the boots. Then we took turns hauling the contraption up the fire trail to Hermit Lake.

It was a bit before midnight and we were about a quarter-mile from the lake when, on a short downhill section of trail, the toboggan/boot/wine contraption ran into the back of Ron's boots and knocked his feet out from under him. Unfortunately, his next point of contact was the jug, which caused an injury that made him limp for days.

"What happened? Where'd you fall?" people would ask him.

"Just too much of the wine glass," he'd reply.

\*\*\*\*\*

We called him Dangerous Dan. Not because he disliked other folks, *a la* the hero of Robert W. Service, but rather because he was just plain dangerous. Especially to those who tried to ski with him.

We were nearing the Pinkham Notch parking lot on the Sherburne trail, and had stopped on the knoll just above the little wooden bridge that spans the brook.

"Race you to the parking lot," he called as he shoved off over the knoll.

The only problem was that the bridge didn't have any snow on it. His nifty new release bindings worked fine, but he did look a little strange lying there with his face rammed into the planks and a fifty-pound pack jammed around his ears.

\*\*\*\*\*

Will and I were skiing down from Tuck's with medium-heavy loads, and all of a sudden the snow on the trail ended.

"There's plenty of snow in the woods."

So we bushwhacked for a while and came to the brook. There was a snow-covered boulder in the middle of the brook so we decided that I, being lighter, would cross from the bank to the boulder, and then from the boulder to the opposite bank. This, of course, while wearing the pack and skis.

This worked fine for me, but when Will stepped one ski onto the boulder, the snow on both boulder and bank collapsed. We decided later that a ten-yard freestyle swimming event for athletes wearing skis, poles, and backpacks probably will never have any Olympic Games prospects.

\*\*\*\*\*

We had pitched the two small mountain tents in the middle of an old "tote" road. Jim's and my tent was slightly ahead of and off to the side of Jack's, but the tents were still close enough to have the side pullout lines overlap each other.

At about two in the morning, our tent shuddered violently.

"Wind coming up?" I asked.

"Probably Jack walking around, tripping over the lines," came the whispered reply. "I'll reach out and grab his ankle. That ought to make him jump."

But the cord of the tent's tunnel entry was frozen stiff and Jim couldn't get it undone before the shuddering stopped.

Next morning, after an inter-tent debate about who was doing what in the middle of the night, we all climbed out into a dusting of new snow.

There, between the tents, was a line of "Jack's" footprints—left by a large bull moose.

\*\*\*\*\*

One final note: Mt. Washington, like any other mountain, must be treated with respect. Spring conditions—weather, wind, and precipitation—are really winter conditions much of the time. By all means go—but go carefully and with someone who knows high mountains. You might not be as lucky as the folks I've written about here. □

*Wescott, a high school English teacher and member of the National Ski Patrol, tells us that the names in this narrative have been changed to protect the guilty.*

## Food For Thought

by Lucia Owen

Given the ingredients that abound in New England gardens, the good sense of farm cooking in these parlous times, and Yankee ingenuity, we can comfortably re-define "gourmet." It ought to mean cooking what we have with imagination, variety, care, and pleasure . . .

We skied into the camp on Stone Pond on a still mid-February afternoon. This occasion has become an anniversary of sorts, one that we celebrate when we can feel the sun getting higher and staying longer. We sit on the sunny side of the boathouse and watch the warmth thicken the air just above the ice. We build a small fire against the rocks and burn some hot dogs. Even though the temperature is in the teens, a cold beer tastes precisely right after the short run in. The hot dogs seem an impossibly elegant gourmet touch, and that notion makes us both laugh. We collect the more odd uses of the word "gourmet," and this looks like another one for the list. (Once we overheard someone describing a meal in a new restaurant: "They serve real gourmet mashed potatoes.") Time to eat another hot dog and laugh some more.

Every self-respecting Yankee cook ought to purge his vocabulary and his kitchen from the taint of the

popular abuse of the word "gourmet." At its worst the term suggests a snobbish life-style totally alien to how one lives in Maine, but one that we are meant to pine for. Somehow we are better cooks if our potholders and cannisters say cute things in French.

At the other extreme, "gourmet" describes anything that doesn't come out of a can. Anyone who takes more than twenty minutes to cook (or eat!) dinner must be a gourmet. Nonsense. Both positions are down-country flim-flam.

We in the north country have inherited a noble regional cooking of delicious proportion. Any use of the term gourmet up here should be made with that cuisine firmly in mind. Just look at the possibilities: clam chowder; peas and new potatoes with cream; Indian pudding; baked beans; mince pie and, most sublime of all, combining taste and texture to stimulate the most jaded palate, red flannel hash. I owe my father-in-law profound

obedience for making me try it. (Unfortunately, this dish requires living through the preparation, even eating, of a boiled dinner—with turnips.)

Given the ingredients that abound in New England gardens, the good sense of farm cooking in these parlous times, and Yankee ingenuity, we can comfortably re-define gourmet. It ought to mean cooking what we have with imagination, variety, care and pleasure. One must take a stand about such crucial definitions. My stand is on the porch at the camp in summer, thinking about rhubarb pie.

It doesn't take long for the February sun to steal back the illusion of coming spring. We cache the hot dog sticks, put snow on the fire, and ski out. When the ice goes, the peas and strawberries will come. Til then, there's always corn chowder for supper.

*From Stone Pond*

# The Shaw Sisters

On the crackling television screen, a debonair Englishman purporting to be a Down East ghost reruns his videotaped antics in the California idea of a Yankee cottage. It all seems quite Hollywood: Hope Lange, Charles Nelson Reilly, even a cute little dog.

And then, out of the kitchen, wiping her hands on her apron, comes the white-haired housekeeper. Suddenly, the show takes on a certain believability. And well it should—that friendly face and Maine accent are real.

Reta Shaw was well known to most Americans long before *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* came along. But not many people know that she is an Oxford County native, nor that she has a sister with no little fame herself.

Marguerite Morse Shaw, now an emeritus faculty member from Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, has been in both teaching and theatre for most of her life. She grew up on Pine Street with her sister Reta. Following her graduation (as valedictorian) from the old Paris High School, she went on to graduate from Westbrook Junior College and Bates.

During World War II she also chose to serve the Red Cross as an entertainer at naval hospitals. From there she went on to teaching at Centenary College, New Jersey; at Westbrook (where she founded the Masque and Candle Dramatic Group); and at American University, Washington, D.C. where she became Assoc. Dean of Students. Somewhere along the way she also found time for her Masters degree from Columbia University and graduate work at Boston University.

Then came a change which took her from her academic desk to the footlights. In 1955 Reta was on Broadway doing the part of "Mabel," the secretary in *Pajama Game*. When she heard that a national company was being formed, she suggested that Marguerite try out.



## Marguerite

by Nancy Marcotte

Marguerite did, and she got the part. For two years she toured the U.S. doing songs and a soft-shoe routine from New Haven to New Orleans. In 1957 she brought the role to Broadway herself.

The next leg of her *Pajama Game* journey led her to the Union of South Africa with an international company's tour for 20th Century Fox. After that, there was no getting the grease paint out of her system.

Though Marguerite Shaw went back to teaching in 1959, she spent years doing summer stock all over the country in such plays as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Oklahoma*, and *My Fair Lady* as well as the old stand-by *Pajama Game*; and with such actors as John Raitt, Andy Devine, and Maurice Evans. Television performances also occupied a lot of her time. She

page 31 . . .

# Of South Paris



## *Reta*

by D. W. Merrill

The town of South Paris, Maine, may well be proud of its contribution to the screen, stage, and television world in the person of Reta Shaw. Moreover, she is still remembered by many of her contemporaries for her outstanding musical achievements, beginning when she was a member of her father's dance band.

Her birthplace was in the now-extinct "Hewitt House" in Market Square, and the date was on a

Friday the 13th. Fortunately, the old superstition about that date has not held for Reta.

Her mother, a descendant of an early Maine colonist, was known to her friends as Edna. She had a poetic bent (see next month) and a natural dramatic ability which was apparently passed on to Reta.

Her father Howard, who organized and led the "Shaw's Snappy Syncopators," a favorite

dance band in the state throughout the Roaring Twenties, was noted also for his quick dry wit.

Thus, Reta's heritage consisted of what she later did best: act and laugh.

When Reta went to New York to start her career, she was not fortunate enough to find work immediately, and used her musical ability to fill in the gap. She had engagements to do self-accompanied original musical monologues in various cocktail lounges, including the famed Radio Frank's in New York City. She also earned money by giving monologues similar to those of Cornelia Otis Skinner, at different organizations. And, as a third method of income, she taught piano.

When recreation workers were needed in World War II, she enrolled in the Red Cross and spent 29 months entertaining troops in Iceland, England, France, Belgium and Germany. She accompanied her acts with her guitar or portable organ, both of which she always carried with her. This stage of her life was one of rough existence—performing in bombed-out barns or under most unfavorable physical duress.

The fact that she both enjoyed and survived this ordeal erased from her mind the last doubt that she was destined to become an actress. Home town plays while still at South Paris High School, and the study of theatrical arts at the famed Leland Powers School in Boston were now paying off.

Her first important role on the stage came in the late 1960's, in *Annie Get Your Gun* with the Mary Martin touring company. Then came *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and, following this, her longest stage appearance, *Pajama Game*, which had an exceedingly long run on Broadway.

After these legitimate stage successes, she turned to Hollywood for movies and television. In the motion picture industry she found parts in such popular movies as

Mary Poppins, *Global Affair*, *Bachelor in Paradise*, *Pollyanna* and *That Funny Feeling*, as well as in several lesser-known productions.

Still, she had not reached her pinnacle, which was to come in television. Her first part consisted of a one-line, one-sentence, three-word comment on the *Mr. Peeper's Show*; and in the delivery of that one line she became recognized as a highly talented comedienne and was given a regular spot on the show. Future appearances were made on the television shows of Bob Hope, Ann Sothorn, Lucille Ball, Red Skelton, and Andy Griffith. She added to this her highly commendable acting in *Man From Uncle*, *That Girl*, *Bewitched*, *I Spy*, *Lost in Space*, and *Ichobod and Me*, to name a few.

Then came her long run and syndication of the program *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, in which she played "Martha" to Hope Lange and Edward Mulhare. This was an occult comedy and seemed natural to Reta because she was, in her words, "raised in an era in which spiritualism was popular. We had mysterious old slates in a trunk in the basement. I was told never to play with them. They had writing on them. My mother and grandmother believed in spiritualism and mediums. I was brought up on a ouija board."

Between jobs, she has appeared in television commercials and, more to her liking, summer stock. She really clings to the "legitimate" stage as her first love.

Turning from her life as an actress to her own personality and character, one finds the same dedication and appreciation that she showed in the acting world. Edward Mulhare termed her "all pro." On the 20th Century Fox lot, she was treated as a queen. Off the lot, she is still the down-to-earth individual that is her heritage. When daughter Kathy was in school, she was active in the PTA and was granted an honorary life membership in this organization for her "concern and active participation." In the same manner, she devoted hours to Girl Scout work, in



In a scene from the movie "Picnic," directed by Joshua Logan, Reta Shaw appears with (from left) Betty Field, Rosalind Russell and Elizabeth Wilson

which she showed the same dedication.

Possibly because of her Maine background, she found Hollywood "cluttered and gaudy." Her own Early American style home in California is not at all pretentious. Its main items of distinction are a swimming pool, a badminton court, and her mother's antique furniture.

She has professed boredom from the rock production of *Hair* yet defended the right of the school choir to include rock music in its repertoire. She did not like *The Graduate* but does enjoy musical comedies (which is natural, since she has worked with Joshua Logan of Broadway fame). She also enjoys light opera, parlor games, small dinner and bridge parties, eggs, cheese, other people's cooking, and her coin collection.

At one point in her life, Reta considered missionary work, but admits no sense of loss for having followed an acting career. She says, "People love to laugh. They love to be entertained. If I can bring a smile or some pleasure to someone, I have accomplished something. One of the biggest thrills in life is when you hear laughter. Night after night,

audiences laugh at the little joke you've told. And then the fan mail lets you know that here's someone you've hit and maybe raised a bit. If you can help even one soul along, that's enough." One might think that her missionary work was meant to be her philosophy so dearly displayed in her acting.

Reta Shaw, of South Paris, Maine, should be at the top of the list of outstanding and successful actresses from our state. □

## FIRST STEPS

i watched you climb  
a tree today  
the way you did it is not  
the way i've done it in the past  
yet i held my tongue  
didn't say  
"take off your gloves dear"  
but rather let you learn  
the way the branches caress your  
cheeks  
the way the sky rests like a timid  
bird  
on your small shoulder

Judith Firth-Kaber  
West Farmington

# THE SOLAR HOME: A Very Real Alternative

by Nancy Marcotte

"I'd like to say to the whole world, if you're building it now, stop. Stop and look at this."

With those words Charlie Spearrin, Jr., Sales Manager with M. S. Hancock Lumber Co. in Casco, adds another plank to Hancock's public promotional platform.

For the Hancock family the soapbox is solar—and they aim to prove that passive solar construction is the most logical way to build for the future.

Hancock *does not* build homes—contractors like Symonds & Son of Casco, Drummond of New Gloucester, Merriam of Naples and K. & H. Foster, Inc. of Wilton are doing that. What the community-minded lumber company is doing is providing information on energy efficiency for builders and consumers. Guided tours of existing homes are being conducted and an informational booklet on passive solar and energy-efficient homes will be available after the first of March.

In doing this Hancock has become the leader in New England and possibly the United States for promoting passive solar. And the fact that they are a retail lumber yard makes it even more remarkable. The

Federal Government has published a 4-page documentary on Hancock's successful solar retailing.

In each of Hancock's yards in South Paris, Casco, North Windham, and Gray, there are models and pictorials of passive solar homes on display.

Many local people want to know: why passive solar? What is it? How does it work? *Can* it work in a cold northern climate like Maine's?

The answer to the last question seems to be a resounding YES. Try to imagine a 3-bedroom house in western Maine, heated by the sun with only a small woodstove for back-up, which has burned thus far in the coldest winter in recent memory less than *one cord of wood*.

For Steve and Ronda Thomas, that house is a reality—they designed and built it themselves in North Windham and they live there now. Even on a gray, overcast day, their passive solar house is warm. When the outside temperature has hit  $-30^{\circ}$ , the temperature of the thermal mass which controls the house heat remained at least at  $+40^{\circ}$ .

A digital temperature monitor installed in the Thomas house records temperatures in all parts of

the house and the foundation at all times. It's easy to prove the reliability of passive solar. Facts like these convinced David Hancock, president of the company, that the method would work in Maine.

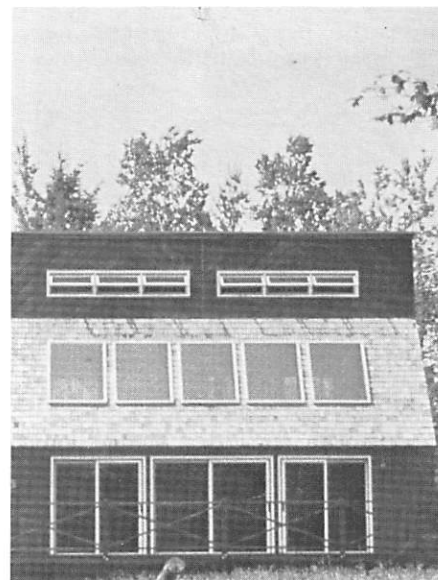
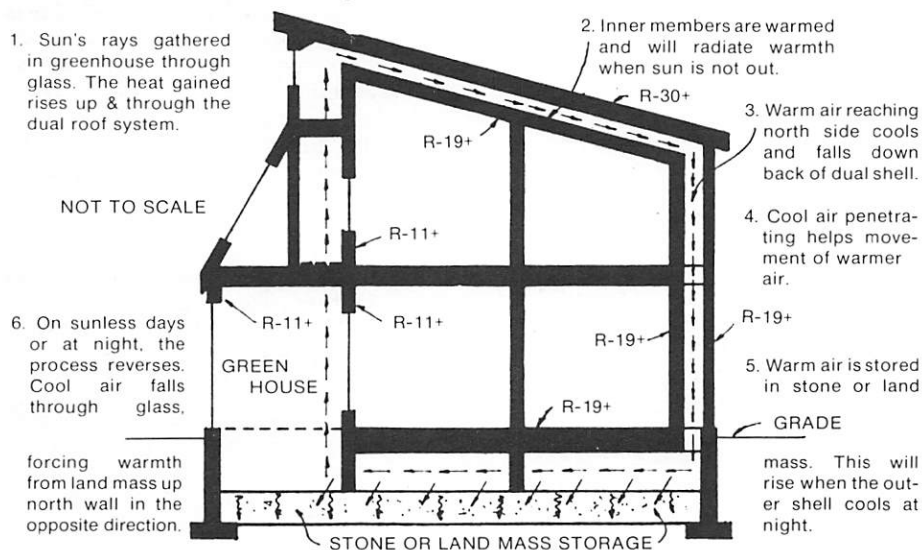
Exactly how does it work? The most efficient method advocated by Spearrin is the dual shell (envelope) home—"the Cadillac of the passive solar housing market." It is essentially a house within a house (see diagram). It operates on several proven scientific functions.

Air is heated by sun streaming into a greenhouse which faces as close to true south as possible (in Maine that's usually about  $17^{\circ}$  SSW for the longest exposure on December 22nd). Then, two processes occur. First, warm air rises into the air space between the inner and outer shells. As it proceeds to the colder north wall by natural convection, it cools and sinks to the thermal mass of stone, gravel, or insulated concrete beneath the floor of the house, which has also been heated by the radiation of the sun in the greenhouse. Cool air passing over it can again warm and rise. A constant temperature and movement of air keeps a home comfortable.

## DAYTIME HEATING CYCLE

### THE DUAL SHELL CONSTRUCTION BY HANCOCK LUMBER

**PURPOSE:** To create a climate around inner living-shell warmer than outside. To lower heating costs.



In fact, I tried everything. Where mountains are, there exist clouds that belong to the mountains. The whole environment seems to me the most beautiful possible upon this earth. I studied the parts, the things that went in to make the whole. The earth as one, the sky and clouds as another. These combined to make one, the expression of a complete wholeness. I travelled these mountains for many years in all seasons and recorded facts. I let them tell me the something I wanted."

These comments about himself and how he felt about nature and his art are a revelation, we're sure, to those of us who knew him. We thought of Shavey Noyes as a wise-cracking town character who doodled sketches of mountains as a hobby. The profound expressions above give us a look at a side of him we didn't know existed.

We have been told that while his exhibit was in New York, it was also shown at Tiffany's. While not certain of this, we don't doubt it for a moment. L. C. Tiffany was himself a very fine artist who would have appreciated the unusual art of George Lorenzo Noyes of Norway, Maine.

Shavey was a punster, a joker, and a prankster as well as an artist. And he delighted in revealing this side of his make-up. He referred to summer visitors as "summer complaints." When he saw his first visitor of the season he would step into the nearest shop and say, "Summer complaint is here." Once,

while relaxing in front of Ashton's Drug Store, he was asked by a summer lady what the natives did after the visitors left in the fall. Shavey's answer was the classic: "We fumigate."

One day Charlotte Lovejoy saw him planting tiny pine trees alongside the main street sidewalk.

"What in heaven's name are you doing that for?" she asked him.

Shavey's reply was, "Well, the town has removed most all of the hydrants along here and the dogs are so-o-o mad! I just got to do something to help them."

He liked to take in the county fair, especially the horse and oxen pulling. The race track curved by closely and one day Shavey was seen taking a sling shot from a coat pocket and firing a pellet at the rear end of a lagging racehorse that suddenly gained on the field. "Just thought he needed a little encouragement," was Shavey's explanation.

He loved to observe people when they didn't know he was around. In fact he became somewhat of a "baby predictor" by watching the habits of young couples "in love." He'd note a couple walking hand-in-hand toward Ordway's Grove, or maybe heading down Whitman Street for the sheltering board piles beyond, and predict about when an unexpected baby would arrive. And he was right more than once, to his great delight.

It's regrettable that so many of the sketches Shavey did no longer exist today. He must have done

thousands, often turning them out in Stone's Drug Store or in Smith's Shoe Store and just leaving them there or giving them to people who would then lose track of them. They were not doodles. They were good art. And he often used neither a pencil nor a pen, but just his hand. His right thumbnail was about an inch long and he used this, and his fingers, to apply the medium to the paper with excellent results. Many of his little masterpieces can truly be called "thumbnail sketches."

Due to gangrene he had to have a leg removed in his later years. This limited his mobility, but he sometimes went as far as Cummings' office on Bridge Street. More often, though, he could be seen at his favorite post in front of Ashton's Drug Store. His mind was still alert and his wit quick and pungent. He died in town in 1945 at the ripe age of eighty-two.

George Lorenzo Noyes was in fact a remarkable man. Very learned and worldly-wise in spite of little formal education; largely self-taught in his chosen line of art; a true friend of many of his contemporaries; and one who really enjoyed life. Along with George and Freeland Howe, Vivian Akers, Walter Bacon, and Minnie Libby, he helped to make Norway a very interesting town to live in.

What are Shavey's exquisite little sketches worth today? All we can go by is what a few of them have brought at auctions: from four to ten dollars. But if some discerning expert in the ever-expanding world of art "discovers" Shavey Noyes and decides, as we have, that his works are outstanding and unique, they could become quite valuable.

Our apologies to you, Shavey Noyes, for thinking of you in the past as the town's joker, instead of as one of its finest artists. Your wild, wonderful, moody sketches of mountain wildernesses are a pleasure to behold and we hope that all of them that exist now will be carefully preserved. Best of all, they make us grateful and proud that you lived among us. □

*Somewhat of a character about Norway himself, Harry Walker is a retired dairyman with an expert's knowledge in the field of nineteenth-century New England art.*



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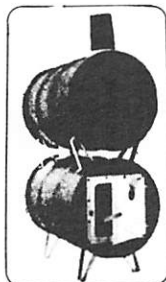
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However, what he turned out was not large oil paintings in many colors, but small pencil sketches in black and white or sepia. And they were intriguing. He sketched the White Mountains, close up, with their gnarled trees, jagged cliffs, and overhanging storm clouds. There's a haunting, timeless quality to them that instills awe in the observer and makes them unforgettable.

We doubt that Shavey sold many of his sketches, or even tried to. He had no financial worries and probably gave away most of his art works. However, recognition is what every artist craves, and Shavey Noyes was no exception.

Apparently the right people saw some of his work, for in November of 1917 a showing of fifty-two of his sketches was held in the Ehrich Print Gallery on Fifth Avenue in New York City. Some titles of his works shown were "Misty Morning," "The Sentinels," "The Gnarled Tree," "The Lonely Valley," and "The Gathering Storm." These give us a good idea as to the mood of the show: haunting, desolate, wild. In the brochure for the exhibit, Shavey comments about his art as follows:

"In regard to the drawings, I have never put into words the 'why' of them. I remember from the very first of being conscious of myself and my surroundings and of desiring to make pictures. Living as I did, in the country where things of great beauty exist, I of course turned to them. All my boy days were lived in the surroundings where nature seemed to be in full expression. The Intended Things, as they seemed to me. I had the freedom of life in the mountains. I travelled all the valleys and explored the mountains, hunted and fished, camped out and had all the privileges a boy could wish for. All that seemed to give my life what it craved. As I grew older, the things seemed to grow more profound and more beautiful, and the desire to express myself, my feelings, grew also.

"I used the pencil to pry into things, to see how they were made, to know the anatomy. I drew the little things, the roots of trees where they were exposed on the banks along the streams and over ledges.

NORWAY

# We Called Him Shavey

by Harry C. Walker

His name was George Lorenzo Noyes. We called him Shavey. "Shavey" Noyes. He had a wit as dry and crisp as an autumn leaf, and he possessed an artistic talent that was as genuine and revealing as a mountain sunrise.

He was born in Norway Village on August 30, 1863, one of ten children born to Amos O. Noyes and Anna Chase Noyes. Amos was a successful druggist, the founder of Noyes Drug Store (now Ashton's). His mother was from Fryeburg, where Shavey often visited maternal relatives during his formative years.

About Shavey's schooling we know little. There's no record of his attending high school and our conclusion is that he quit school somewhere between the fifth and eighth grade. People who knew him well say that Shavey figured he could learn more outside the classroom by roaming the hills, forests, and streams of scenic Oxford County. He was tall, lean, and limber, and he could walk the woods and climb mountains for hours on end.

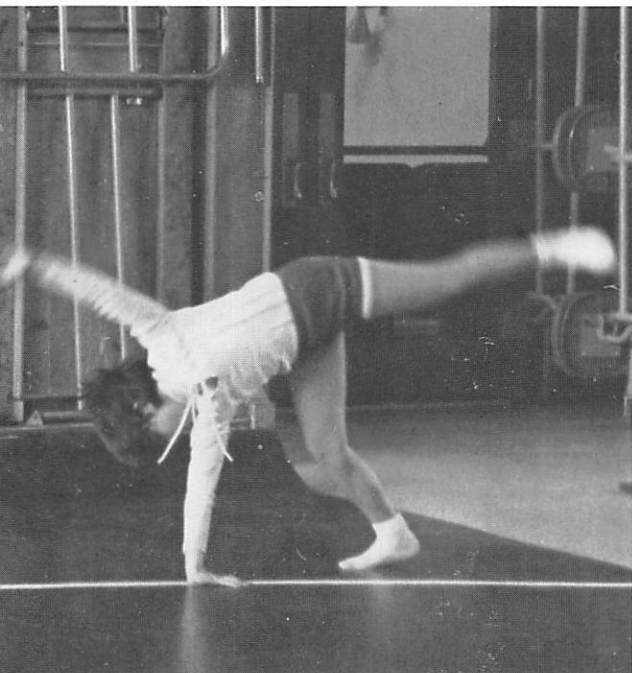
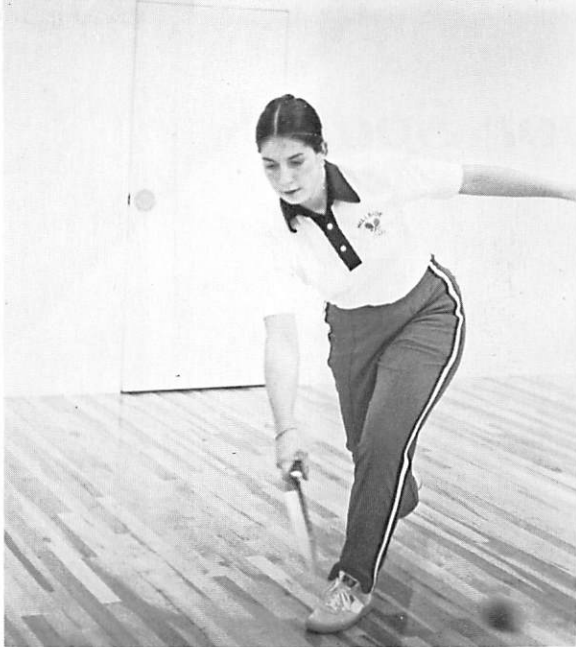
Let's not assume that Shavey was uneducated because he was a grade level dropout. He read extensively and could discuss any subject with anyone, no matter how far they had gone in the academic world. The things he learned first-hand by roaming the wilderness often eclipsed the learnings of accredited naturalists.

Around Norway, Shavey Noyes was noted for his unusual wit. But he was also known for his artistic talents. We've been told that one day, while visiting relatives in Fryeburg, he suddenly decided that he wanted to become an artist. To learn something about art, he went to nearby North Conway and sought out one or more of the many artists who painted there summers. He may have contacted Benjamin Champney, or Frank Shapleigh, or any of many others. Anyhow, he somehow acquired a grasp of what art is about and started his career.

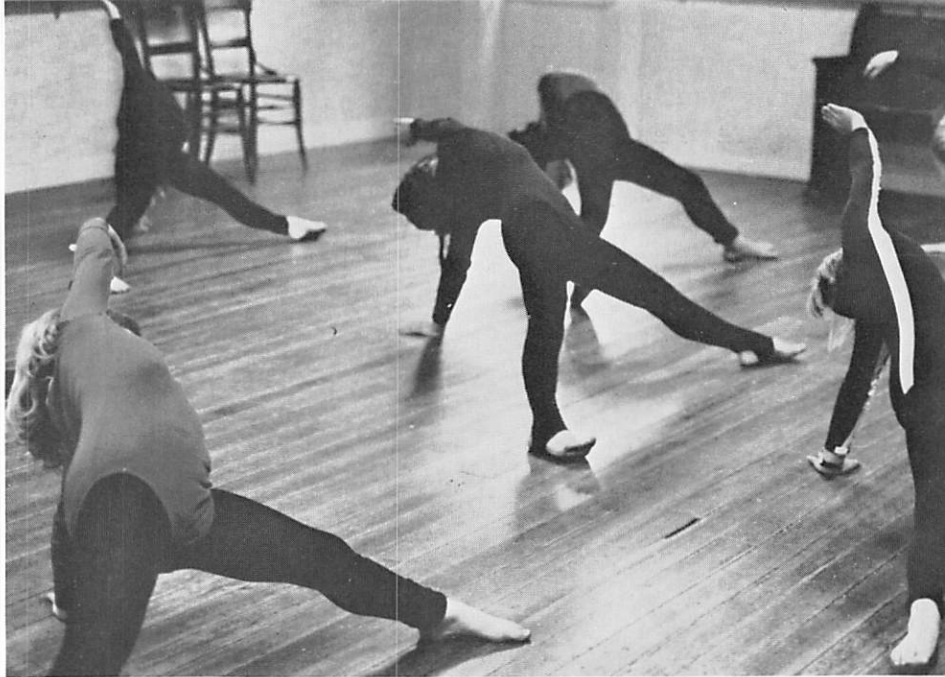
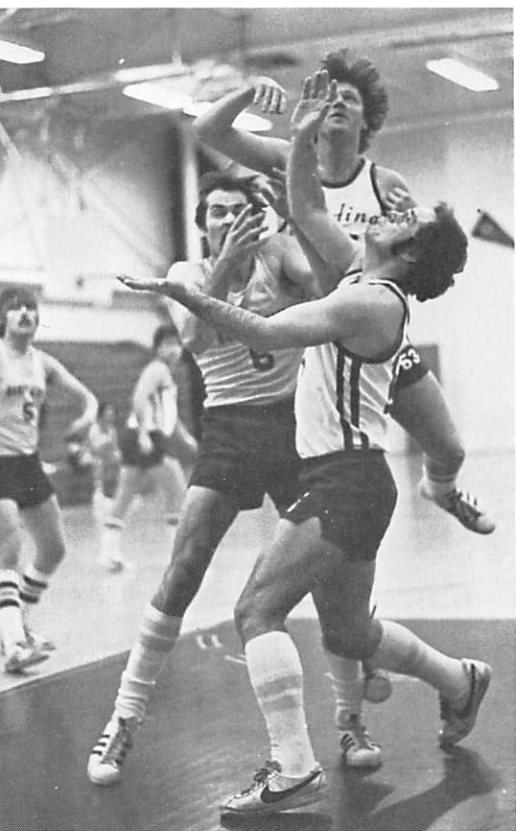




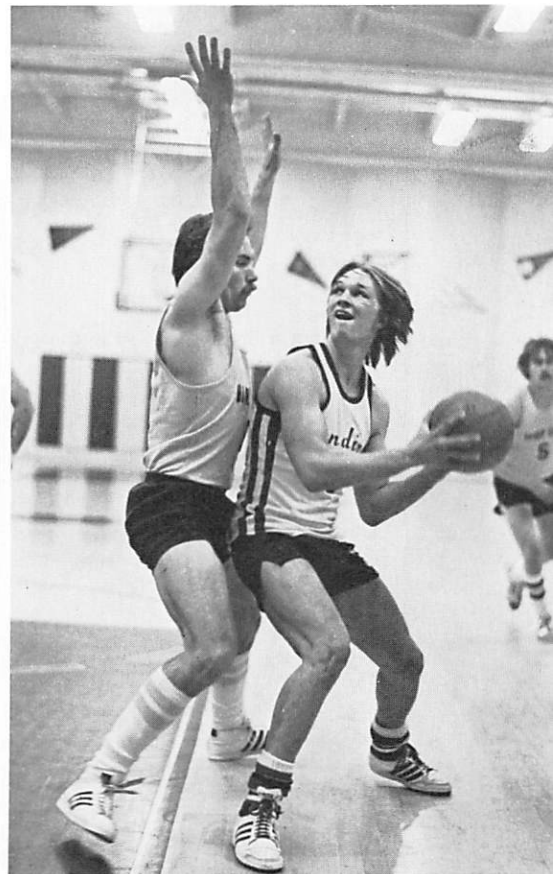
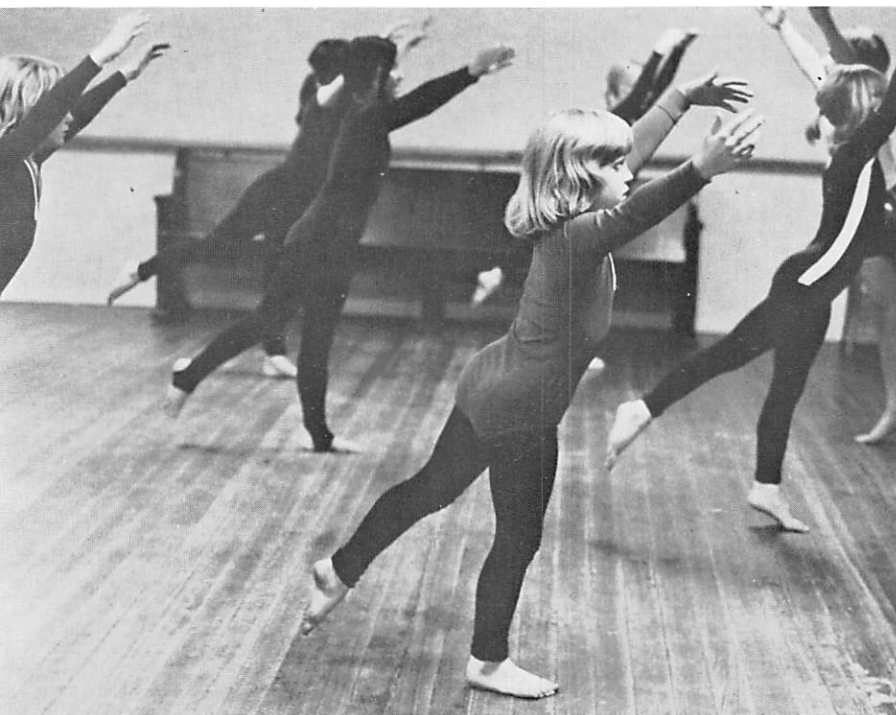
In addition to ever-popular school activities, area gyms can be found in use on Saturdays, too. Here Y.M.C.A. youth basketball and gymnastics for both boys and girls. Upper right is Barbara Olson, second best racquetball player among women in Maine. The folks at Hillside Racquetball & Health Club extol the virtues of the sport as a family recreation—they say anyone can play without being a great athlete; it burns up calories and relieves tension as well. Look around your area. There's probably plenty to do to keep active indoors.



# Indoor Sports



When winter life in the northeast kingdom gets to be pretty much the same every day, the pent-up energy and boredom called "cabin fever" can set in. With all the indoor activities we have available to us in western Maine, we can keep cabin fever at bay without freezing our toes. On this page: Oxford Hills Adult Basketball league players Al Snow of *The Handy Store* and Chuck Smith, Rick Micklon, and (lower right) Reggie Corbett of *The Landing* teams keep in shape. Also on this page are examples of some of the ways dancers keep in shape at the Western Maine Art Center. Judith Berg and Claire Matolcsy conduct classes for children on Tuesday afternoons and adult classes in the evenings.



# Ayah

letters to the editor

## SUBSCRIPTION PRAISES

A year ago I gave my wife a subscription to your magazine as a Christmas gift. Since then we have both greatly enjoyed reading it. Some of the facts we were well acquainted with while others we are pleased to learn . . .

I am enclosing original poems of Maine for your consideration. I note that much that you publish under the heading "Poetry" is little more than prose in verse form without rhyme or rhythm that goes to make real poetry:

### THE STATE OF MAINE

Maine's the state in the U.S.A.  
That gets the sun's first golden ray;  
'Tis on Katahdin's lofty peak  
The sun first puts a golden streak.  
Its rock-bound coast and forest green  
Make it stand forth with splendid sheen.  
Its native sons and daughters, too  
Live lives of courage, bold and true.  
This eastern outpost of the land  
Excels with sea and landscape grand.  
It has fine beaches where folk play  
From early morn to close of day.  
This fine place to be born and reared  
To many hearts is still endeared;  
A splendid place in life's late years  
To be retired it now appears.

*The Poet Parson  
C. W. Temple  
Kezar Falls*

My father enjoys his subscription to *BitterSweet* very much, especially the articles written by Raymond Cotton of Hiram. Our family has for three generations spent summers and all vacations in Hiram. We are delighted that many historic stories and tales are being recorded.

*Donna Morris  
Hanover, Mass.*

Your magazine of local color is very notable and deserves a wide circulation, which hopefully it may receive.

*Katharine M. Rolfe  
Bridgton*

We all enjoy your magazine very much and read it from cover to cover.

*Martha Leino  
Harrison*

Please find enclosed a check for \$16 to pay for 2 subscriptions to your magazine. We like it very much—was glad to see the article on Margaret Flint

Jacobs—as her sister-in-law goes to the Senior Citizens Drop-In Program in Gorham.

*Lillian Grant  
Gorham*

## EZRA BEAL REVISITED


I can add a note about the Ezra Beal Diary which Wini Drag wrote about in your last issue. The only copy of the diary that she know of, she said, was published in the *Norway Advertiser* in 1926. The *Advertiser* did publish excerpts from the diary, but they started in the Nov. 20, 1925 issue (page 2) and continued every week or every few weeks until the July 1, 1927 issue (page 8). Anyone interested in reading the whole diary will find it in the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School in Boston. It was given to the Baker Library by Agnes J. Beal. The Baker Library also has an 1821-1828 ledger from Norway, Maine, a gift from the Weary Club of Norway.

We enjoy reading *BitterSweet* very much.

*Mary H. Parsons  
Ann Arbor, Mich.*


**Ed. Note:** Wini Drag wrote about excerpts from the diary which were published in booklet form in 1926.

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advice given. When a distraught subscriber called for help because her horse was hung up by its halter and choking, operator Mildred Davis' succinct advice was: "Cut the rope!"

When local timber dealer Joe Pitts needed to track down some of his crew, he would ring Elsie and say, "Want to go man-hunting, girl?"

She was the doctor's unofficial answering service and the fire department's official alarm system. "Sometimes when a subscriber called they were so frightened that they would simply say, 'My house is on fire, send the Fire Department,' and hang up without saying who they were." At times like that, the operators had to recognize the voice. That also helped in the case of one subscriber who used to call and say, simply, "Get me my house." They knew it was Hartley Pitts.

The job of answering service was not without its tragedies, too. On November 12, 1938, Elsie summoned the firemen to a blaze and a short while later, still at her post, was brought word that her husband, Phil, a member of Harrison's volunteer fire department, had died of a heart attack.

And eventually there came a time when new management began to set up rules and insisted that the operators stop doing some of the personal duties, like taking messages for the doctors. Elsie stood up to her bosses and insisted that they continue.

"Some of the new people were from the city and they didn't understand what the service meant to the folks in a small town," she says.

For forty-five years Elsie Burnham Spaulding had responded to the needs of her fellow townsmen but on May 4th, 1955, she "made her last connection and pulled her last plug" to turn the town over to Ma Bell. The town, in turn, grateful for those years of devoted service, honored the operators at a testimonial dinner where each was given a sum of money equal to the number of years they had worked.

It was the end of an era as progress (?) marched on. □

*Mary Thomes Carlson lives in Harrison where she operates New England Horse Supply.*

# Elsie Spaulding, "Telephone Lady"

by Mary Thomes Carlson



Elsie Burnham Spaulding at 88 is spry as a cricket and bright as the buttons which she avidly collects. With scarcely a gray hair (and none of this "only her hairdresser knows for sure" business), she drives her car, walks to church, and runs her big house with energy and dispatch.

Descendant of one of the first settlers on Harrison's famed Summit Hill—once known as Burnham's Hill—she has spent all of her years here. Forty five of them were with the telephone company.

In 1910, at age 17, she applied to the Maine Telephone Company and was hired as a relief operator, working twenty-four hours for \$3.00 a week. The exchange at that time was located downstairs in the Grange Hall, with four trunk lines and sixteen party lines. There were two lines to the toll center at Norway going via the Waterfords, and a line each to Bridgton and Cornish. The first private line in town was for Roland Woodbury, engineer on the Bridgton and Saco Railroad.

"Each line had a drop with a cover which came down showing the number which had rung. A plug was plugged into the jack below to answer. There was a clearing out drop which signalled the operator that the caller was through talking, but hardly anyone ever rang off, so the lines had to be watched," recalls Elsie.

In 1914 she became head operator, working seventy-two hours a week for \$8.00. A few years later, when New England Tel. & Tel. took over the Maine company, her pay was raised to \$12.00 with overtime for Sundays and holidays. Her sister, Hazel, a student at Bridgton Academy, was hired as relief operator, walking from North Bridgton to Harrison to work the lunch hour and then back to school again. Hazel Ward stayed with the company for 31 years. When I was a kid, I thought the Burnham girls

were the whole phone company.

The night operator in those days was always a man. He was allowed to sleep, having a bell to waken him when a call came in. He was supposed to test the drops when he came on duty at 9 p.m., but he usually didn't. On some lines the bell wouldn't stop ringing and then he would either have to stay up all night or get Elsie out of bed to fix it. She had to come down to the office, take off the back of the board and check each drop until she found the one causing the trouble.

In the fall of 1921, the Block in the village burned. After the present building was built to replace it, the phone company decided to move into the second floor. The switchboard was hauled up the street on a handsled and quickly installed. Elsie remembers that Happy Hapgood had a taxi stand down in front of the Block and when someone wanted him, they would call the telephone office and the girls would call out the window for him. They answered lots of questions in those days, both on the phone and out the window; questions like: "What time is it?", "Is the mail in?" and "Where's the fire?"

As Harrison's summer camps increased, more lines were added and another full-time operator hired. Even so, the switchboard could become jammed, as happened when an epidemic broke out at Camp Wigwam and the parents of 200 campers began calling in.

Another hectic time was during the 1938 hurricane when the power was off for an extended time. The operators had to hand-crank and plug in, and if you've ever tried to rub your head and pat your stomach at the same time, you'll see it wasn't easy. On top of that, the only light was a kerosene lamp hanging from the ceiling, making it difficult to see the numbers on the drops. Only one

girl could work because the second position had lost its batteries and, of course, there were more calls than usual.

The telephone office was not the best place to be during a thunder-shower. Everything was grounded but lightning would play around the frame back of the board. During one particularly severe storm, Elsie had her headset burned out when a man was electrocuted at South Harrison. During storms, lightning would cause the drops to come down and would affect the carbon between the metal pieces on the board so that they would have to be continuously cleaned to keep noise out of the lines.

The small-town operator was the center of the town's communication system; her duties were numerous and varied. The phone bills were paid at her office, long-distance calls timed (Elsie still has the clock she used), questions answered and

Mrs. Spaulding



*From Gilbert York of Mechanic Falls comes another of  
his father's poems:*

## **ONE SATURDAY NIGHT** **or Wreck of Old Hundred and Eighty**

Where the Androscoggin winds its way  
And high in air flings its clouds of spray,  
As over the dam its waters flow  
To race featherly white down the ribs below,  
Is the pleasant town of Mechanic Falls  
From the world shut in by mountain walls.  
Down the river ten miles below  
Are the fair Twin Cities we all well know.  
Claddy Herrick nearly died with fright,  
'Twas the month of December, a Saturday night.  
As twilight fell he was on his way  
To see Will Rogers' famous play.  
A kindly brother gave him a ride  
And calmly they rode through the countryside.  
He stayed in Lewiston an hour or more  
To see the Old Kentucky Shore.  
Then brimming over with laugh and song  
He boarded the trolley that came along.  
One hundred and eighty her number plate,  
We reckon she was three minutes late.  
Rolling alone on her homeward way,  
Old hundred and eighty began to sway.  
About three miles from the old home town  
All the stars in the Heavens came falling down.  
Then came a crash like the crack of doom,  
Then darkness and silence like that of the tomb;  
And Claddy Herrick, too green to burn,  
Sat there helpless and watched her churn,  
Escaped with his life from that awful wreck  
And is hustling broke today, by heck!

*C. W. Herrick*  
*"Poet of the Promise Land"*



# **WRITING CONTEST**

**For all High School and College Students**

**BitterSweet** is beginning a contest for Prose/Fiction/Poetry writing. Letters have been sent to all area high school and college English Departments. We want to encourage the beginning writer and at the same time to gather material from all over this part of New England.

The deadline for submission of material will be June first. The categories are Prose (factual articles about people and events, current or past); Fiction; and Poetry. Winners will be published and payment will be awarded to the chosen writers.

Please make submissions of writing, marked with author's name and address; school and teacher to Post Office Box 6, Norway, Maine 04268. All entries should be neatly typed, double spaced on 8-1/2 by 11 size paper. We're sorry but we cannot return entries, so please do not send your only copy.



*Photo by Bob Hutchinson*

## PHOTO CONTEST

**W**hat is the essence of life in Maine? To us it is BitterSweet—it is the lovely frost patterns on the windows even though your house is frozen. It is the way chopping wood warms you twice. It is the glorious sunset at the end of a scorching summer day. It is autumn's consolation in a riot of colored leaves. It is being snowed in and missing school. It is truly both bitter and sweet.

If you feel you have captured the bitter/sweet essence of life in Maine with your camera, we want to see your photographs. One will be chosen each month for publication in the magazine. In our end-of-the-year double issue a cash grand prize for the best of the submissions will be awarded and the winner will be published on a subsequent cover.

We prefer good-quality black and white prints, but are also interested in spectacular color slides. This contest is open to anyone. Please send a stamped self-addressed envelope for return of your photos. Mail them to Post Office Box 6, Norway, Maine 04268.

# Bitter Sweet

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### GRANDPOP'S SPRING SONG

One more rough winter we've bumbled through, Ma,  
And Spring's just a whisker away;  
Hooray for a pair of decrepit old coots!  
Let's kick up our heels and sashay!

We've worn our long johns and mittens and boots  
'Til we're both fed up to the chin  
With feeling so clumsy and walking like bears  
Just to hold a little warmth in.

We shovelled the snow and we banked up the house,  
And battened the windows and cracks;  
We both took our turn at splitting tough wood  
'Til we darn near wore out the old axe.

We lugged wood in and we lugged ashes out—  
It likely was good exercise.  
We must be plumb healthy and spry as a cat,  
With muscles unheard of for size.

We've weathered some storms and the wind and the cold,  
And we're still full of ginger and starch;  
So now we can grin as the sun swings high—  
Three cheers for the middle of March!

*Doris Thurston  
Norway*

If extra-frigid outside air requires more warmth inside, then a wood fire is the best method to provide it. A wood stove gives off *radiant* heat much like that of the sun and it will also fuel the thermal mass system with warm air. Then the simple fact that, below the earth's surface, the *geothermal* temperature remains fairly constant also adds to this system. In effect, the whole house acts as a solar furnace. And, in the summer, the system expels hot air at the top for cooling.

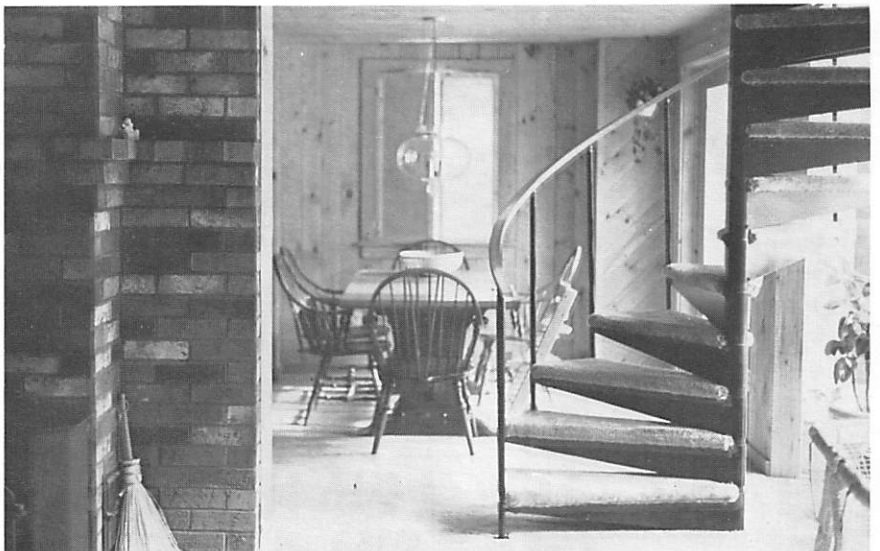
For the Thomases it works well. Their baby plays in the sunshine of the greenhouse. Their house is comfortable. Their utility bills average \$40-50/mo. And they had burned, by the end of January this year, only three-quarters of a cord of wood!

For some people, the concern is whether or not the house will be attractive in appearance. The Thomas home—with drywall interiors, pine panelling, a curving staircase, french doors and soft carpeting—is extremely attractive, one of the loveliest of new homes. Hancock is busily preparing ideas for houses which will resemble those anywhere, with a choice of gambrel, shed, or saltbox-style roofs.

There's really no reason for expensive automatic solar panel machinery systems, according to Spearrin. There's a simpler, more natural way to do it. "It's all common sense that the cave men knew," says Charlie. Colonial builders knew it, too. They faced their doortrees south, into the winter sun.

The chief secret behind successful passive solar houses—and, in fact, behind other kinds of low-energy methods that Hancock promotes, including retrofitting (tightening up older buildings)—is insulation. Not just insulation, but super-insulation.

As Spearrin says, "If the sun is giving you all those BTU's, why throw them away?" (A BTU is a British Thermal Unit, the normal measurement of energy. It is the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of 1 lb. of water from 62-62°F. 38,000 BTU/sq. ft. is considered energy-efficient.) That is why these buildings have insulation values of approximately R-50 in the



**Top:** The Exterior of the passive solar Thomas home in North Windham.  
**Middle & Bottom:** Ronda Thomas and the attractive interior of her house

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roof, R-38 in the back wall, R-22 on east and west and probably R-30 in the greenhouse. It is why the houses all feature insulated box sills, headers, and foundations.

It is also why Hancock recommends that professional contractors put together at least the shell and insulation of any dual shell house: so that it will be built tight and right. Short cuts don't pay. Spearrin makes himself available for consultation on this subject.

To minimize further heat loss, all passive solar houses should be built with an air-lock vestibule entry. Glass area should be covered with tight-fitting insulated shutters after dark and on cloudy days—they save up to 10,000 BTU's per sq. ft.

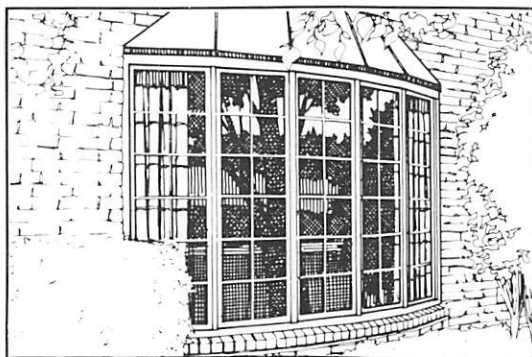
Equally important to the convection operation of an envelope house is the venting system—especially in the humidity of Maine. Solar engineers figure 1 sq. ft. venting for every 6 sq. ft. of glass. Automatic vents can be designed in. Deciduous trees left to shade the glass when leafed out in summer will also help.

"In Maine we use a heating system 75% of the time, cooling 13%. And (in standard housing) we are usually comfortable only about 12% of the time," Spearrin tells us. He is a part-time builder as well as a sales manager and he is well-read in the field of solar energy. But Charlie Spearrin would be the first to disclaim any expertise. "It's not complicated, it's simple... but there are no definitive figures. It's a new technology and anyone who tells you he knows it all is untruthful."

"We don't advocate prices on the houses. Contractors do that." Most dual shell houses seem to be about comparable with other new con-

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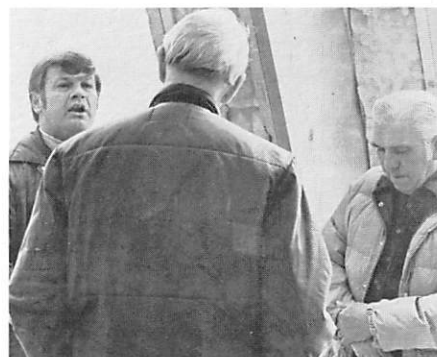
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Charlie Spearrin, left

struction: between \$45,000 and \$70,000 for a normal house.

"But, the solar gain of sunshine changes daily. And it's different for every lot and family," Spearrin stresses. "What is the earliest time in the morning that your lot gets sun, and the latest time in the afternoon? How does your family use the house? Are you home all day or only in the evenings? . . . What it will cost to heat these houses is only an approximation, based on what has happened in other houses." The Department of Energy Resources in Augusta does an energy audit for these homes—which are coming in well under the energy-efficiency guidelines.

In general, a solar house requires that you live a little more in contact with the elements—you have to be aware of the sun and the weather on a regular basis. You have to check vents and close shutters to equalize your home's temperatures. You have to participate with your dwelling. But the rewards seem great, in both fuel savings and fuel security.

That's the main reason why Hancock lends its vital support to spreading the concept of solar construction. But another excellent spur just has to be the fact that, in a discouraging era of soaring fuel prices, impossible interest rates, and a crippled construction industry, there are at least a dozen solar homes waiting to go up in the area this spring. All those boards and nails and windows and insulation panels will keep the lumber business going.

If you want more information on how to GO SOLAR with Hancock Lumber, call Charlie Spearrin, Jr. at 647-4201. He loves to talk sunshine. □



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## Doughnuts

# Homemade

by Lucretia Douglas

Some cold, windy March day when it's much better inside than out, why don't you try making a nice batch of fresh, hot doughnuts for the family?

They are really easy to make and a great favorite.

### Buttermilk Doughnuts

Cream together in the mixer bowl:

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp. Crisco
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg (or mace)
- 1/4 tsp. ginger

Add 1 cup buttermilk.

Put in sifter:

- 4 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda

Sift this into creamed mixture and mix well with wooden spoon. The dough will be too stiff to mix in your mixer unless you have a big five-quart one.

Let dough chill while you melt 2 pounds of lard in deep fat fryer at 375°. Then scrape dough out on floured board, knead lightly and roll out about 1/4 in. thick (or less if you like thinner doughnuts). Cut with doughnut cutter, knead trimmings together, and cut into more doughnuts. Fry the centers for the children (and Dad and Mom).

Fry (about 2 or 3 minutes) on one side and then turn with two forks (do not prick doughnuts) and fry until brown on the other side. Remove and drain on paper towels. Serve plain or sugared.

My grandson's favorite doughnuts are called "Sticky" doughnuts. These are easier to make than you might think, although they take two or three hours to rise, being made with yeast. I make them about

four times a year in the winter and early spring. They should be eaten right away and are best hot.

### Sticky Doughnuts

Dissolve one package dry yeast in 1/2 cup warm water. Scald 1-1/4 cups milk, then cool to warm and add dissolved yeast to it. Stir in 2/3 cup sugar and 1-1/2 cups flour. Cover bowl and set in warm room for about 1 hr. until sponge doubles.

Then add one beaten egg and 1 Tbsp. melted butter (remove from heat and cool a little before adding to dough).

Sift:

- 3 cups flour (sifted once before)
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg & 1/2 tsp. salt

Stir into sponge. Mix well, and let rise one hour. Turn out on floured board. Knead to form ball of dough and roll out 1/4 in. thick. Cut into doughnuts and cover with clean cloth. Let rise until double in bulk.

Heat 2 Tbsp. lard in deep fat fryer to 375° and fry doughnuts about 3 minutes (or until brown) on each side, turning once. Drain on paper towels.

Meanwhile boil 1 cup milk and 1 cup sugar with pinch of salt. Dip hot doughnuts in glaze as fast as you fry them. Pour any leftover glaze over doughnuts. Serve warm.

The buttermilk doughnuts keep well, but Sticky Doughnuts don't. □

Mrs. Douglas, who often contributes fine recipes, lives in West Baldwin.

# The Gift Of Eggs

Fiction by Rebecca S. Cummings

When seven-year-old Marja woke she thought she was still in her nightmare. In the darkness, her mother was sharply demanding that they get up. "All of you! Up! Up! Up! Tekla! Aino! Helga! Up!"

Father's voice carried from the next room, ordering the five older boys out of their warm beds. "Fire!" he shouted. "Fire!"

The hen house behind the barn burned in the black night. Mother and Father pounded at the flames with the blankets from their bed. Matti worked the pump furiously and the children handed over buckets of water, one to the other, and were able to make no more than a faint hiss on the fiercely burning blaze. The flames lit the scurrying bodies grotesquely, creating a kind of pagan dance, perhaps to frighten off the gods of winter and to allow spring its time.

Marja, in her flannel nightshirt, crouched by the open door of the woodshed, too frightened to even cry. All the poor hens and their babies were dying in the fire. It hurt to be burned. Just last week she had burned her arm as she tried to take the loaves of bread from the oven. Mother had doctored the burn with fresh butter, but still the puffy blister had oozed. Marja pulled back into the safeness of the black shadows, away from the flickering light.

Despondently, they sat around the table in the early dawn. Each of the grown-ups had coffee. The younger ones—Kalle, Toivo, Helga and Marja—were given a cup of milk to have with their breakfast of *velli* porridge and slabs of hard-crusted rye bread. Every single hen and chick was gone. It had been the coal-fired brooder. It should have been replaced long ago. But who had that kind of money? And now what? Where were the groceries to come from? Each was occupied with his own thoughts, which were the same as everyone else's.

Marja had no idea what it was like not to be in a Depression for she had

never known anything else. But sister Tekla, who had already quit school to work as a helper to Mrs. Benton in town, told wonderful stories about how it would be when they grew up and had rich husbands. They would all have automobiles and silky dresses with lace collars, the kind Mrs. Benton had, a different one for each day of the week. They would be able to go to the movies, something Marja had never done, any time they wished, to both the matinee and evening shows if that was what they wanted to do. Fancily-dressed doormen at hotels and shopkeepers would call them "madame," and they would be able to snub their noses at the Perkinses and Tylers who thought they were so high and mighty because their parents were Yankees and had been born in America, and because their fathers had jobs. That's how it would be.

"Let us pray," said Mother. With head bowed, she thanked the Lord for the health and safety of her family and for the food on their table. She prayed in Finnish, knowing that even though this was America, He, at least, understood her language. She asked for His guidance in helping them through this trouble. "God will provide," she said with a firm shake of the head. "Eat up now. It will be a long day."

The children walked together to the corner to catch the school bus. Julius Perkins already knew about the fire. His family had seen it from their place, but he was eager to wrench the whole story from Kalle. Thanks to Julius, who loved to bear bad news, every other child on the bus, as well as the driver, knew the story of the burned hen house. Julius thought the idea of a burning hen house was hilarious, perhaps because his older brother was a known chicken thief, and he punctuated the story at each retelling with whoops of cruel laughter.

That morning Marja had trouble concentrating on Miss Tibbetts's

mathematics lesson. The chalk in the teacher's fingers squeaked across the blackboard and Marja, who could just barely see anyway because her eyesight was so bad and there was no money for eyeglasses, listlessly wrote down what sums she thought she saw. Her mind was not on the math lesson, however, for she was thinking about the tragedy.

On Saturdays she sometimes got to go with Father to town when he took the eggs to Simpson's store. Although they had had nearly a hundred hens, the family seldom ate the eggs themselves. The eggs were used in trade for groceries. Last week Father had splurged, as he sometimes did, and brought home some frankfurters. Of course, no one had been able to have a whole one, but they each had a half of the delicious treat. Would they ever be able to have them again, if there were no eggs to swap? Marja's breakfast turned in her stomach. She thought she might throw up.

Miss Tibbetts strolled around the room, examining each paper. She carried her pointer which she rapped severely on the edge of the desk whenever a pupil erred.

Marja winced as she heard the pointer thumping against Freddie Whitman's desk. Freddie was nine years old, the biggest boy in second grade. Miss Tibbetts always got after Freddie.

The pointer snapped furiously across Marja's desk. Marja, pale-faced and frightened, cowered, hoping she could disappear or that a few of the sums, at least, would turn out to be correct.

"Look!" gasped Miss Tibbetts. "Look at that! You haven't even copied them correctly. That's supposed to be 6+7 and you wrote 6+1. Look! Her long finger with the painted fingernail jabbed at Marja's paper. "How can you ever get anything right that way?"

Marja looked at the angry face and burst into uncontrollable sobbing. "I tried, Miss Tibbetts. I tried." She put her head down on the



desk, the skinny body in the same faded cotton dress she had worn every day since September, quivering in the deepest throes of grief. "Our... our hen house. It... it burned. And now we won't have any more food!" she wailed, the tears streaming.

"That's nonsense," Miss Tibbetts snapped. "There's more to eat than just eggs. A few hens can be replaced. Now get on with your work. Maybe you'd better go closer to the blackboard and copy those again." She turned to the classroom full of staring children. "All of you! Get to work!" Perhaps it was sympathy, but that morning Miss Tibbetts did not hit the girl's desk again.

Meals were sparse. Fortunately the brooks, gurgling with spring waters, were full of little trout. They had learned from their Yankee neighbors to gather fresh fiddlehead ferns and dandelion greens. The two cows still gave plenty of milk, and there was a big bin of rye meal from last year. But there was no butter for the bread, for Mother sold that; and there was never any sugar for the coffee or a sweet roll for a treat.

It was towards then end of May, too early yet for wild strawberries, but Mother sent Marja one day after school to the corner field to see how they were blossoming.

Marja followed the twisting cowpath to the brook. She crossed carefully, not wanting to slip in the cold water. Fat purple violets grew by the edge and she picked a handful, thinking how pleased Mother would be when she put them in an empty bottle on the kitchen table. The aged apple trees were just coming into bloom, and she swung herself into the sweet-smelling branches and looked at the world from her new height. If she were a bird, she thought, she would always choose an apple tree in spring. She whistled snatches of a folk tune she had heard her Aunt Eila sing so many times. Marja had just learned to whistle and the sound pleased her.

She headed for the big rock that jutted solidly in the middle of the pasture, defying any farmer and his team to try and remove it. To Marja, it looked like a castle. Surely the fairies lived nearby, perhaps in that growth of juniper. Perhaps even in that wooden box that was not quite hidden by the prickly junipers. She was eager to investigate the mysterious fairy box. Through the slotted lid, it was easy enough to see what was inside. Eggs! A whole crate of eggs!

Marja had never run so fast. Surely the wind gave her wings. She flew into the driveway, too out-of-breath, too excited to speak.

"Mother!" she gasped. "Mother!"

Helga was taking in the rows of clean white sheets and underwear from the clothesline. Marja turned her attention to her older sister. "Helga!" she panted. "Come with me. I've found eggs! Eggs!" Already Marja was out of the yard, bounding like a young deer towards the brook. Helga, too bewildered by the outburst to question it, was soon behind her, the wash forgotten.

Mother beamed at the crate of eggs the puffing girls placed before her. "God provides," she said with conviction. "God provides." Her eyes watered. "The wash, girls. Go get the wash!" She turned to the rack behind the big black stove and reached for the heavy iron frying pan.

That evening they had fried eggs—two each with their supper of boiled potatoes and turnips. Two eggs and no need to share. Marja's stomach had never been as satisfied. She nearly burst with the pride of being the provider.

After the evening chores, Marja and Helga returned to the pasture. God or the fairies or whoever had left the box of eggs just might give them another.

Helga saw him first. She pulled Marja back with a sharp jerk of the arm.

The man walked slowly back and forth among the junipers around the big rock. He seemed to be looking for something.

Both girls dropped back and crouched behind the stone wall.

"It's Jake Perkins," Helga whispered. "What do you think he's doing?"

"He's looking for our eggs!" So it had been Jake, Julius' shiftless older brother! He had been the one. It hadn't been God or the fairies after all.

"Let's get out of here," Helga hissed.

They crawled along the edge of the stone wall until it was safe to run.

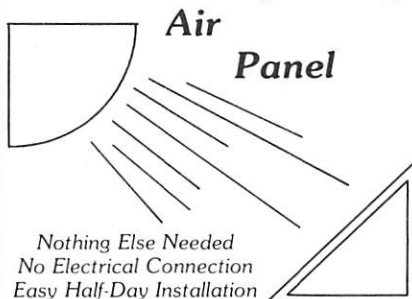
Neither Helga nor Marja mentioned going back to the pasture. But at breakfast the next morning when they again each had an egg before them, Marja peeked at Helga, who smiled back, while Mother again gave thanks for the gift of eggs. □

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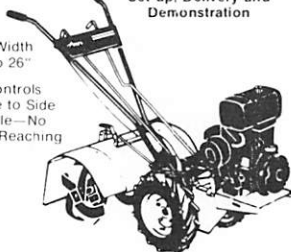
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HIRAM

## Notes From Brookfield Farm

by Jack Barnes

We are now one week into the month of March. After several nights of frigid temperatures that at times dipped below zero, a stream of warm air has descended upon us. The days are longer and the sun is climbing ever higher, sending warm rays which render renescent all which has lain dormant for so many months. It is a relief not to have to cope with frozen chicken waterers and to be constantly thawing out water pails which are left for the horse and sheep. It often amazes me that our hens and geese continue to lay through these bitter cold snaps.

Yesterday as I walked through a section of our woods, I could discern the liquid notes of the stream of life trickling beneath a thin layer of snow. I thrilled to the tinkling call of the blue jays—perhaps the first notes of impending spring uttered by any of our feathery folk. As I came up our dirt road, made soft in places by the temporary yielding of initial layers of frost, I observed a mourning dove searching for any tidbits of grain I may have dropped on my way to feed the ewes and pig.

The juncos are here and I have begun to sprinkle fine seed in with the sunflower seeds. My cardinal has vanished. I can only hope that he has sought out a warmer clime and did not meet with a tragic accident. Life is so frail even for the mighty.

I never cease to marvel at how our birds, some of which journey as far as South America, manage to survive and return to us in the spring. It is an Herculean feat—one of Nature's great miracles. I must soon clean the bluebird houses in the intervale in hopes that at least one pair of bluebirds can commandeer a dwelling before the tree swallows ascend upon our valley.

This morning I awakened to gaze out upon a world so completely altered in a few hours by what appears to be a major snowfall. The

snow is moist and it clings to the conifers, weighing many of the boughs to the ground, and transforming the naked gray branches of our deciduous trees into exquisitely beautiful lace mosaics. The leeward side of the tree trunks and underside of the branches are a marked contrast to the pure white snow, rendering the landscape beneath the great gray dome an intricate detail of light and dark (*chiaroscuro*!). A huge yellow plow with a flashing red light is passing by the house, pushing a mountain of snow before it and sending a spray hurtling into the air and over our rail fence like the spray from a gigantic ocean wave crashing against a rocky shore.

I have my tractor poised and ready to complete our liberation, although I am not certain from what we are being liberated. I should much prefer to see teams of horses or oxen trampling up our road pulling a mighty snowroller, and go out and hitch up the horse to a sleigh and fo dashing merrily over the hard-packed snow to the distant village for my mail. It is days like today that I like to re-read John Greenleaf Whittier's lovely poem "Snow-bound," or Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Except for a few treks to the henhouse and barn, I shall enjoy the luxury of devoting a day to writing. It is saddening when I hear people complain about being bored on a stormy day. With a library surrounded by shelves of good books, albums and tapes of music from around the world, books and articles to write, and the aroma of assorted herbs from our garden simmering in a pot of stew on the woodstove, I shall never know the feeling of ennui. □

*Barnes, a college teacher, writer, and farmer, lives with his wife and various animals in Hiram.*

## Come, Sit Under My Apple Tree

by T. Jewell Collins

Have your friends and family ever humored you about something you really wanted, never expecting you to get it because it was such a ridiculous idea? Well, Margaret Merry Sawyer of Waterford is used to being humored—and also to bringing her ideas, ridiculous or not, into being. And by now her family has ceased being surprised by the improbabilities that under Margaret's quiet perseverance become realities.

Her latest improbability literally came to fruition one spring. It is now the talk of family and friends, and rightfully so. For Margaret has an apple tree laden with bright red apples in her dining room. It is not easy to write objectively about someone you have known and admired for a long time, but after hearing about the apple tree in Margaret's house, I knew the time had come.

When my son and I entered Margaret's sunporch to see her apple tree, the first growing object to meet our sight was a ceiling-high tamarillo (tomato) tree with green ovals of fruit hanging from its branches. My son asked incredulously, "Is this the apple tree?" In answer to his question, Margaret silently motioned us to follow her the length of the sunporch, turning left into the dining room.

There, painted on one off-white side wall of the room, near a corner, was the sturdy brown trunk and branches of an apple tree covered with green leaves and globes of red apples, the envy of any orchardist. The limbs with their fruit reach up across the ceiling and onto the french door leading to the sunporch. They form a canopy to sit under, the appealing fruit within arm's reach, permanently red-ripe, but unfortunately not edible. We gasped in disbelief. Margaret quickly placed a chair under the tree, plucked an apple from the refrigerator, and obligingly posed under this artistic phenomenon, vividly conveying the delight she felt.



Margaret and Billie Sawyer

How did this colorful wonder come to be in Margaret's house? Anyone acquainted with Margaret knows she has a determination that is not easily sidetracked. The more circuitous the route to a desired end, the more persistent Margaret is until the goal is reached, whether it's trying to match thirty-year-old curtain fabric to complete a quilt, or getting a photograph to complete an article about the bear she met while climbing Mt. Tir'em (*BitterSweet*, March, 1979).

Thus it was only a matter of time before Margaret approached her sister, Mary Merry Oatway, a portrait painter from East Winthrop, Maine. "I'd like an apple tree painted on my dining room wall, big enough for me to sit under," specified Margaret, "with lots of apples on it."

Mrs. Oatway's paintings, prints, and sculptures have been shown in

museums and art shows throughout Maine. her pen and ink drawings have been included in book illustrations, as well as reproduced for framing. Although she had never done anything this large before, she agreed to tackle the job. She came one weekend and worked for two days and one evening, returning three other days. "She wanted to give the apples more highlights," said Margaret, "but there are just too many of them. Anyway I am delighted with the tree just as it is."

Margaret's dining room and the adjoining kitchen are the heart of an old red farmhouse, circa 1853. The house was moved on rollers by oxen to its present location from a site further up the road early in this century because the well ran dry at the previous location. Margaret calls it "the house that Jack built." At the time it was moved it was a one-story house. Before the Sawyers moved into it in 1946, a second story was added to the back half of the house. They had the front half added not long after their arrival; and a few years later, the 40x12' porch was built on and double doors were cut through from the living room and what is now the dining room.

"It's really a nondescript house, but I like it because of the land, I guess," said Margaret, smiling and looking out the wide dining room window to the field beyond. Margaret likes to grow new and different plants in her large yard and has apples, osage orange plants, three holly plants, a cherry tree, rhododendron bushes, English daisies, a walnut tree, and cultivated blueberries, among others. The Sawyers' three children—Sylvia, Timothy, and Merrylyn—were all brought up in this house on Plummer Hill.

The kitchen and dining room were recently remodelled. In addition to the apple tree, the dining room now has a woodburning stone on a brick platform with two arched brick areas underneath for the storage of

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Weld

## SOLAR HEAT

Seven months of winter  
in the state of Maine  
Let the sun shine wherever it may.  
Waste not a drop of the earth's  
resources,  
They have to last for all our lifetime.  
Wind howls around the drifts, salt  
melts the ice away . . .  
The sun is free!

Jean Evelyn Rand  
Fryeburg

## UPDATE

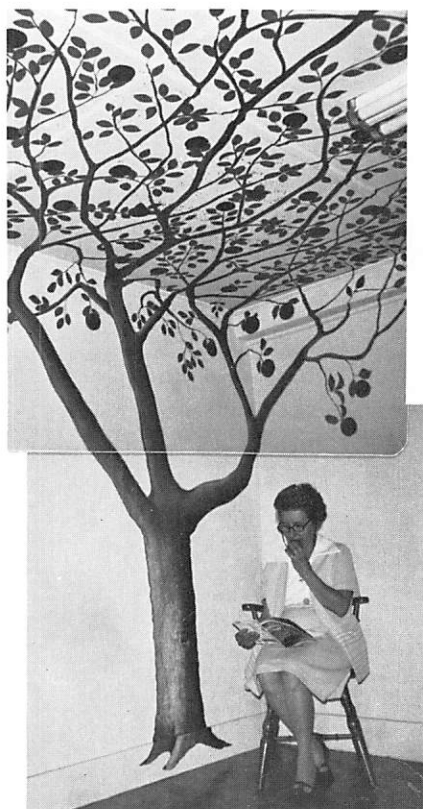
The other day while messing  
around in the attic I found a very  
old book from which I gleaned this  
jewel:

The father gives a kind command.  
The mother listens, approves.  
The children all attentive stand  
And, understanding, move.

After much cogitation I have up-  
dated it as follows:

The father barks a gruff command.  
Ma just don't give a hoot.  
The children all defiant stand,  
Stick out their tongues and scoot!

Raymond Cotton  
Hiram



Composite of two photos showing  
the painting on wall and ceiling

wood. Above the stove, adorning the  
brick wall, is a carving of a Jersey  
cow (symbolizing Merrylyn's pet  
Jersey) done on a piece of red slate  
similar to the flagstone so often used  
for front walks. Also carved on the  
slate is a buttermold pattern. These  
were done at Margaret's request by  
Bob Deis of Oakland, Maine, who  
has been using stone as the medium  
for his carved bas-relief figures for  
the past six years.

One branch of the painted apple  
tree that Margaret loves reaches  
right over her desk in a busy corner  
where Margaret does her writing.  
Her articles have appeared in *The  
Lewiston Journal* magazine section,  
*Maine Life*, and *BitterSweet*. She  
also worked on the *History of  
Waterford*.

Margaret's husband Billie retired  
from the Pumping Station in  
Waterford after 37 years; and  
Margaret retired soon after, having  
spent 44 years in the business world,  
most recently in the office of the  
Oxford County Extension Service of  
the University of Maine. She has  
climbed the highest mountains in  
Maine (Mt. Katahdin), New Hamp-

shire (Mt. Washington) and New  
York (Mt. Marcy), along with many  
other mountains in the northeast-  
ern part of the country. "Mountain  
climbing is one of my great, great  
loves," said Margaret with that  
same enthusiasm she conveys when  
talking about any one of her many  
interests. Billie doesn't even try to  
keep up with her.

"She's on her own when it comes  
to mountain climbing," he said,  
waving his arm. "I'll follow her to  
church suppers and meetings of the  
Waterford Historical Society, but  
not up mountains!" The energetic  
Mrs. Sawyer has also criss-crossed  
the United States twelve times!

Margaret's love of apples led her  
to making apple-head dolls, and  
during the first six years of the  
United Maine Craftsmen Fairs in  
Cumberland, she sold over a  
hundred, plus twenty crib quilts, all  
made by hand.

In recent years, Margaret has  
apple-picked for a friend and  
neighbor, Charles Fillebrown, when  
the fall apple harvest ripens. When I  
asked her if she still likes to come  
home to sit under her apple tree after  
a day in the orchards, she smiled  
and said, "Of course! I never get  
tired of apples."

It's a good thing because, with a  
minimum of care, she's going to  
have an apple tree with ripe red fruit  
all over it in her dining room for a  
long time to come! □

Mrs. Collins is a frequent con-  
tributor to *BitterSweet* who spends  
part of the year in North Waterford.

## TRACKS

Even in the black, tonight,  
As I plod on down the tracks,  
From the sky there is some light.

The wind rakes at my lumber shirt,  
Snow sifts in through curves  
and cracks.

It dampens and cools, but does  
no hurt.

Snow fills up my deep boot print,  
Ere my boot pulls from the white,  
And of my path leaves not a hint.

My hatless head is dusted over  
By the whipping flakes in flight.  
I think of summer, fields of clover.

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# The Sentinel



by Jim Keil

Moonlight bathes the countryside which lies serenely still as the village sleeps. The cold, crisp, fresh winter air gives definition to cotton-candy clouds hanging motionless in the air and, with the glow of the moonlight, paints a beautiful three-dimensional picture. A landscape, sleeping, waiting to spring to life the with the arrival of the new dawn.

For some, the day will come before the dawn, as the quiet air wails to life with the deafening screech of the village fire siren, awakening those who sleep with one ear always on the alert, beckoning them to dress quickly and hurry into the frigid night air. They are needed.

Headlights punctuate the darkness on all roads leading to the fire station, some with additional blinking lights under the grill explaining the urgency of the drive. Lights can be seen both ahead and behind, as the volunteers, still only seconds from peaceful sleep, prepare for what lies ahead.

Cars stream into the parking lot as the station bursts to life, lights aglow, the sounds of the starters on the huge pumpers reverberating off the walls of the building; these sounds to be buried in the scream of the first truck siren as it rises. The truck nears the road and makes the turn for the fire, painting everything for 100 feet in the rotating flash of the red beacon atop the cab. The second of the two lead vehicles screams away, only a few feet off the bumper of the first. Doors open and firemen pile in, arms loaded with equipment they haven't had time to put on yet.

"Unit Six to dispatch. We're enroute to the fire," can be heard over the fire channels of the radios as, one by one, the trucks call in to allow the whereabouts and activities of each piece of equipment and all manpower to be logged and

directed to the places where they are most needed.

As the lead truck reaches the scene of the fire, a myriad of mind-boggling decisions greets its occupants—each requiring quick-thinking action. The driver must instantly make a commitment to his strategy in fighting this fire.

With flames, red-tipped orange, already licking their way hungrily

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**The firemen know from experience that, in such cold temperatures, to shut down a line once it is charged with water can be a fatal mistake.**

---

around the edges of the roof, and black smoke as thick as pea soup billowing upward, the building is already fully involved in flames. The driver moves his vehicle in position to attack with an inch-and-a-half line run from the truck's tank.

Circling the building, determining the "lay of the land" and the characteristics of the fire, the driver and his passengers quickly locate the owner of the building and his family, trying to ascertain that everyone is out of the building. This time they are observing from a safe distance. While the lead truck attacks the flames with the smaller lines, using water from its own tanks, the second truck in moves to the nearest supply of water and begins to set up pumping operations to run the larger two-and-a-half-inch lines.

Two major problems confront the pumper and its crew as they try to set up a water supply. The first is that the New England winter may often produce temperatures of twenty or thirty below in the dead of night. Ice over the potential water source may be as thick as two feet. Fire axes fast provide access to the

supply and the huge pumper soon begins drawing water up from the black depths of lakes, charging the large hoses that can deliver the kinds of pressure needed to beat down flames and oxygen-starve the fire into submission.

The firemen know from experience that, in such cold temperatures, to shut down a line once it is charged with water can be a fatal mistake, since the nozzles can freeze solid in a matter of seconds. All lines, once brought to fight the fire, must run—if only at a trickle—and the entire scene of the fire is soon changed into an eerily icy spectacle. Great pools of ice form underfoot; helmets and coats hang aglitter with stalagmites of ice; beards, mustaches, and eyebrows are encrusted as the volunteers man the hoses; ladders are completely encased in a jacket of ice, bringing even the most sure-footed among them to a head-on confrontation with the forces of gravity.

The decision-making process in all fires leads, inevitably, to the final decision to be made by the chief of the department: that of declaring the fire out and of ordering the equipment and men back to the station to await the next call.

The last truck out is the lead truck, as the radio crackles, "Unit Six returning to base." It's a welcome sound for the bone-tired firefighters, who ride happy in the knowledge that this fire claimed no victims; saddened by the knowledge that one family will suffer the hardships of being driven from their home, the building almost a total loss as a result of faulty installation of a wood-burning stove.

"Thank God they got their smoke alarm installed correctly," comments the driver, dryly, as he turns into the station.

After what may be two to six hours hard labor on a "working fire," the weary volunteers return to the station for the work that is just beginning. That involves clean-up and making things ready for the next alarm, for all the hose that was used must be hung up to dry. Hose is first dragged and swept before being drained and pulled into the drying tower via ropes, pulleys, and the arms of firemen.

Trucks must be gassed up and tanks refilled and topped off. Any equipment that was damaged at the fire and is necessary for stand-by must be repaired. Often a fire uses so much hose that auxiliary supplies must be removed from storage and made ready.

The firemen interrupt their work and line up to receive their pay for the night's work: cups of steaming hot coffee, sandwiches, donuts, and hot soup; and, most important, the realization that their efforts provide a measure of safety for the village and its inhabitants. □

*Keil writes from his home in Naples.*

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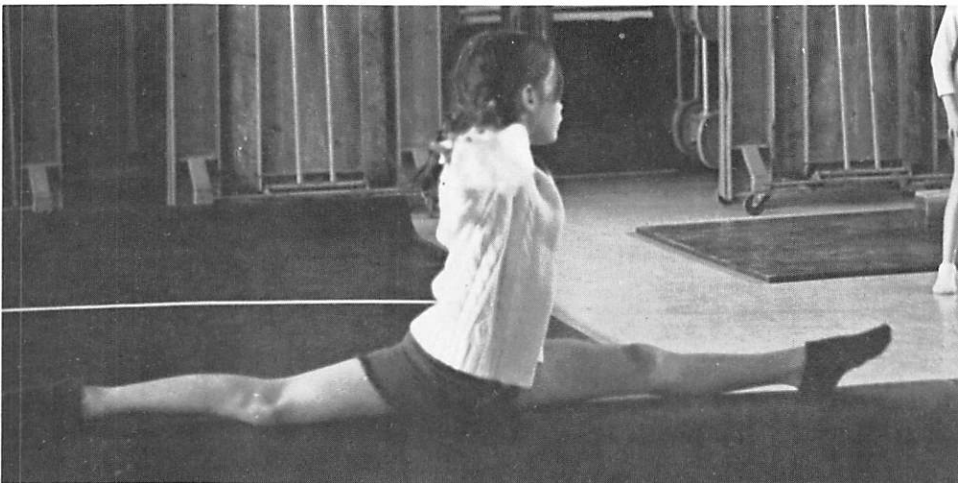
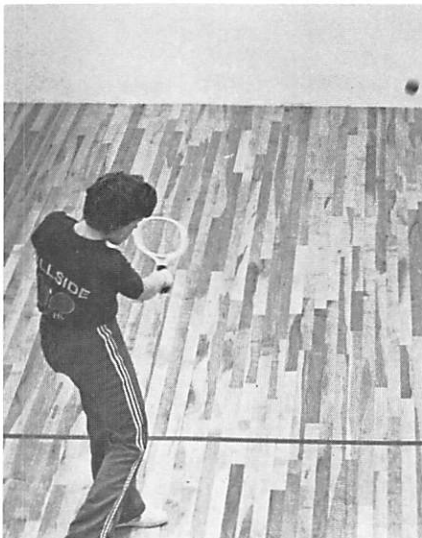


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## Medicine For The Hills by Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.

### ALLEGORY

Custom is habit turned to gold. When, with the benefit of time, we reflect upon our customs, we marvel at how obvious they are and wonder that they were not adopted long before. Such is true also of those rare friendships we view with envy from afar; friendships whose exercises are termed "customary."

The friendship of Jean-Paul and Michel embodied such tradition. By happenstance, they had met one Monday night twenty years ago for an evening of commiseration and confession. Neither party would now tolerate any intrusion upon their weekly business meeting. From this meeting came sustenance and a spirit to continue. A sustaining friendship like this was, to both parties and to the envious villagers, quite obvious and quite valuable.

Their businesses shared the same street and served the same clientele. They had, therefore, similar problems and grievances and would profit from comparing notes—finding growth in a supportive friendship. Why should they not have become close friends? It was now such an obvious friendship. But how many of us ever do the obvious? Are we not more prone to intention, procrastination, and regret?

I have intimated that this friendship was quite enviable. It was certainly all of that. For one thing, their intense loyalty to one another was palpable. A careless remark about Jean-Paul, or about Yvette, and Michel's face would darken as he forced a loose tongue to retract and withdraw. And, after so many years, it is still mentioned in town about the night the Germans were loudly critical of Michel's table, and were quietly asked by Jean-Paul to check out within the hour.

Yes, the loyalty was well-known, and envied. More valuable, and not

as apparent, was the candor and honesty in the friendship. It was "Michel, you're getting careless with your sauces," and "Jean-Paul, you are too greedy, mon petit." It was "Michel, I am thinking of leaving Yvette." And from an incensed Michel: "Jean-Paul, leave her to us, my pig of a friend. We will drive you from Alsace, from France, gutter bum. Go play with your empty-headed school girls! Leave Yvette for us." (Jean-Paul did not leave.)

As was the custom, each Monday Michel vacuumed the dining room after the luncheon, placed his order for the week, and closed the Auberge de l'Ange for the day. As always, he stood for a few minutes on the edge of the cobblestone street, hands in suit coat pockets, cigarette centered in pursed lips. He surveyed his village, the village of his father and of his ancestors. The l'Ange had been managed by a Garondeau for three centuries, of which Michel was quite proud. He took delight in telling this to Americans. It made them, he thought, feel young.

To the north the cobblestones ran rapidly out to the country, between the rows of linden trees, past Maurice's farm. Lovely Maurice, who provided Michel with frogs' legs for soupe de cuisse grenouille. Maurice, whose family held the secret of the finest goose liver in all of Alsace (and therefore in all the world). Every week Michel stopped at the farm for the goose liver, the poultry meats for terrine, the frogs' legs, and for whatever vegetables might be had. Each week, with honesty and affection, Michel embraced Maurice and said, "Because of you, Maurice, I have a star."

A lonely man, Maurice was unable, as Jean-Paul was fond of saying, to open his arms to life. He knew that there was more to pate de

foie gras than merely goose liver and therefore viewed Michel's praise with suspicion. He found such flattery discomfiting and always hastily disengaged from Michel's embrace. Yet, Maurice envied this friendship of which we have spoken, and wondered why, for him, life was so empty.

To the south, Rue Charlemagne curved into town, past Jean-Paul's, past the Patisserie Lucien where were found the lightest croissants and best Napoleons in Lembach, past the Cafe du Temps Perdu, restaurant-turned-tourist-trap that it was, past the red-slate-covered homes airing down comforters. Slowing now, this ancient street, worn smooth by ox-carts, by the coming and going of cows to pasture, by the brown-eyed children of Lembach, by steel-helmeted Prussians, by the marching Huns of Wilhelm, by the grinding Panzers of the Wehrmacht, and most recently by the inquisitive ramblings of tourists to this forgotten corner of France. Slowing now, did this rippled street take in the geraniums, the plum blossoms, the pretty daughters of Rene Bouchard-Martin. Curving away from the church of St. Bernard, past all this seeming contentment, the road rushed out to meet post-war asphalt, to be guided through the Maginot Line, toward the cathedrals of Strassbourg, to the south and, measured in time, a century away.

Michel, done with his memories, field-stripped his cigarette, pocketed the butt, and turned south to the Hotel Cheval Blanc to find Jean-Paul and to talk about business.

**(to be continued next month)**

*Dr. Lacombe, a member of Oxford Hills Internal Medicine Group, regularly shares with us his insights into the total person and health.*



## Jay's Journal by Jay Burns

"Well, I just can't see another winter like last year. It just doesn't happen. I'm sure we'll see a lot of snow this winter."

That was my pronouncement at the general store in Waterford this past December when I was asked by James Tyler if I thought we'd have another snowless winter.

But I think that I was wrong. As I write this article on February 1st, the hills and lakes region has received a paltry 28.5 total inches of snow. And as I listen to the weather radio I hear a forecast for torrential rain. So I was wrong. At the midpoint of winter it has been a nearly snowless season.

But what happened? It started out beautifully. On November 18th the hills and lakes were blasted by a real snowstorm—the first in a year and a half. Ten and three-quarters inches of snow fell.

It was the earliest major snowfall on my records. But it was also a storm that was never supposed to happen. The system was the remnant of the last hurricane of the season, having blasted the Caribbean the week before. By the time it reached the Gulf coast it seemed to be just another low pressure system, and area forecasters treated it as such.

All the forecasters (Cupo on WCSH, Horn on WGAN, McNally on WBLM, and the folks at the National Weather Service) called for the storm to drive up the coast and slip far out to sea. They forecasted an inch or two for our area, maybe more for the coast since they'd be closer to the center of the storm.

But they forgot an important fact: as a remnant of a full-fledged hurricane, the storm still had some

of the features of a hurricane. Although it had lost its well-developed "eye" and destructive winds, the storm still retained the massive size and incredible moisture content of a storm that had originated in the tropics.

A storm of this size and moisture content is not easily pushed out to sea by prevailing winds. Instead, the storm pushed like a snowplow up the coast without going out to sea. And the result was 10-plus inches of snow, much to the delight of the snow-starved ski industry.

But the snow from the first good snowstorm in a year didn't last. Six straight days of temperatures in the upper 30's and 1.3 inches of rain on the 25th sealed the snow's fate. It was bare ground as usual by the beginning of December.

By December 1st, conditions were brewing for a most destructive weather phenomenon. A storm had formed in the mid-Mississippi Valley, forecasted to move to the southern New England coast and then out into the Gulf of Maine. Rain changing to snow was the weather word for the area.

But the storm went further east than expected—one of over five major storms that just missed the area through the first part of the winter. Out over the ocean the storm intensified rapidly and expanded its circulation. It slowed down and sat over Nova Scotia, pumping cold northwesterly winds down over Maine.

When a storm is northeast of the state, its counterclockwise circulation gives us northwest winds. During the windstorm of the 4th and 5th, a high pressure system over Ontario also sent us northwest

winds. The two systems acted like a huge funnel to shoot Arctic air over Maine. The two systems intensified the wind over this region, especially over the Waterford-Stonham-Lovell corridor. The result was the worst windstorm in this area's history. Winds of approximately 50 to 70 miles per hour caused heavy destruction. Central Maine Power trucks from Brunswick, Newcastle, and Augusta were called in; I counted thirteen trucks, myself, headed for the devastated area.

The pattern that developed during those fateful few days in early December seemed to set the pattern for the first part of the winter. On the 20th and 21st a blast of Arctic air sent temperatures plummeting to as low as -22° in the valleys of Bolster's Mills.

It must be explained here that Arctic air, not Polar, is the coldest. When a forecaster talks about Polar air, he is usually referring to Continental Polar, which comes from the land-masses of northwestern Canada. An air mass is a large mass of air whose horizontal distribution of temperature and moisture is nearly uniform. An air mass is labeled by that content. It can be either cold (Polar) or hot (Tropical); it can be wet (Pacific, Atlantic or Gulf) or dry (Continental).

There are seven air masses of the United States. They are the weather-makers. There is cP, Continental Polar, which is dry and cold; pP, Pacific Polar, wet and cold (that's the stuff that gives Washington and Oregon its dreary weather). Then there's cT, Continental-Tropical, dry and hot, which strangles the dry lands of the

Southwest; gT, Gulf-Tropical, wet and hot, which invades the Gulf Coast; and pT, Pacific-Tropical, which holds court over Southern California. On this coast aT, Atlantic-Tropical, wet and hot, spreads over the southeast and aP, Atlantic-Polar, wet and cold, gives us our winter Northeasters. These seven air masses travel around their parts of the country, bumping into each other, taking over territory, retreating, and thereby making our weather.

Our typical winter air is cP, Continental-Polar. But this winter much of our bitterly cold air has swept down from the Arctic (the very cold region north of the Arctic Circle to the North Pole).

Our first cold came on the 21st and 22nd of December, but the real bone-chilling cold didn't arrive until Christmas Day. On the 24th a cold front pushed through, sweeping out the seasonable air of the previous two days. By the morning of the 25th it was -20 and the wind was howling from the Northwest at 20 to 30 mph. The temperature struggled to make it to zero that day. On the 26th the temperature fell again to -20, recovering only to 11 degrees.

The cold broke until January 4th when another Arctic plunge sent us to the deep-freeze. On the 4th the mercury fell to -19 but only recovered to -10. With only a brief intermission this cold spell hung on until January 18th. Although I registered temperatures no lower than -19 during the spell, in the valleys where the cold air collects at night temperatures from -30 to -40 were reported.

The reasons for this winter's unusual cold lie west of the Mississippi. For much of the first part of the winter a huge air dome of high pressure has remained anchored over the Rockies. In a high, the air piles up in the center and slowly sinks to the ground, at the same time spreading out. Air that sinks is stable and will not form clouds. Air that is rising, churning and twisting will form clouds. In a low system air moves into the center and rises rapidly, forming clouds and precipitation.

This huge dome of air over the Rockies prevented any storms from coming ashore over the middle or

southern Pacific coast. At the same time it pushed the frigid air farther eastward. Instead of the cold air plunging down over the Great Plains, it plunged down over New York and Maine. What storms did arrive at the West Coast were shunted north along the northern edge of the great dome of air pressure and allowed to plunge south through the eastern part of Canada. By the time they reached us, most of their moisture had been squeezed out; all they could do was usher in another blast of Arctic air.

But by the 18th of January a change had occurred. Slowly the storms that had been pushed north had been able to bring more and more of their warmth and moisture to the barren reaches of Canada. Slowly the frigid extremes of Canada were being replaced by moderate temperatures of the storms that had originated in the warm Pacific.

So by the end of January, Canada was exhausted of all its extremely cold air. Temperatures in central Canada, usually sub-zero, approached freezing.


By that time the Great Dome had weakened and a storm had moved inland over California, giving them the first real rainstorm of the winter. The storm moved to the mid-Mississippi Valley and stood poised to lash the hills and lakes region with wind and rain by February 2nd.

The winter of '81 will surely be remembered for its cold. I remember the Springfield thermometer registering a record low of 23 degrees in my bedroom. I remember crawling beneath our kitchen each morning to turn on the heat tapes to thaw out our frozen pipes. I remember becoming an expert at jumper-cables so that I could jump-start any car in 2.3 seconds. And I remember the horses racing at Scarborough Downs in sub-zero temperatures with the moisture from their breath freezing into glistening sheaths around their necks.

The Cold of '81 was comfortable for neither man nor beast. □

*Burns, a senior at Oxford Hills High School, practices his meteorological expertise as Waterford's weather observer for WCSH-TV.*

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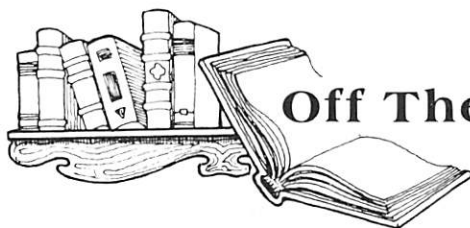
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M'Lou & Peter Terry

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## Off The Shelf

by Wini Drag

**New England Gothic—A Novel**  
Addison J. Allen  
Chilton Company-Book Division  
Philadelphia, 1960

*Again this month, the book being reviewed is out-of-print but it can be found in used bookshops and on family bookshelves. Also, there are numerous articles being kept on file at the South Paris Public Library on the original case.*

*A word of warning—beware of asking to borrow the book from a friend—it may end a good friendship. There are a number of reports of books and complete scrapbooks which were loaned and never returned.*

In today's news a murder, even in a rural area of western Maine, brings only a couple of days of front-page coverage spiced with lots of "what really happened" stories passed along the grapevine. It is then mostly forgotten except for a small item appearing months later in the second section of the paper

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giving a brief statement on the verdict reached at a usually-venued trial.

Things were handled differently some fifty years ago. The murders of a prominent Paris Hill doctor and his wife resulted in trials which held this cluster of towns in a beehive for over a year, with stories and feelings running high for over two decades.

There are people in the area today who were involved as relatives, witnesses, or curious on-lookers who still regard the affair with guarded response.

In 1960 a reporter by the name of Addison J. Allen wrote a thinly-disguised novel chronicling the story. Both the hardcover edition **New England Gothic—A Novel** and the paperback **Thunder Over South Parish** (Dell, 1964) are the most sought-after out-of-print books in this area.

The novel centers around the teen-age boy who confessed to the murders after having been stopped by New Jersey police with the two bodies in the car he was driving. The youth (Paul Andrews in the book, Paul Dwyer in real life) was sentenced to life in prison following his luridly detailed account of how he committed the crime, supposedly because the doctor had insulted his girlfriend and their relationship.

Following Paul's imprisonment, however, rumors started flying and Paul (then safe from the threats and harassment of his girlfriend's deputy sheriff father) started talking about what really happened.

The changing testimonies of not only the central figures but of police and witnesses added to the sensationalism which filled the papers and brought reporters from Boston and New York.

Though obviously not a professional treatise, the book has kept alive the story, now a legend, of "the most celebrated murder case in Maine." It's fascinating reading—a good "who-done-it" bedtime relaxer.

Slight variations of place names such as Parish Hill, South Parish, Norwood, Herkimer Academy, Lake Pemmican and the legend of Polyockett add amusingly to the continued appeal of the book. Historical tidbits are worked into the narrative referring to the famous one square mile which produced more state and national leaders than anywhere else in the country.

It is difficult to separate a review of the book (which doesn't give any indication of dates) from the pictures and reports which flooded the newspaper in 1937 and 1938.

To this reviewer, it just whet my curiosity to know more. I rummaged through the clippings at the public library, reading verbatim testimony and the many stories rehashing the whole affair after the deputy won his freedom early in the 50's. The repeated efforts of Paul's mother to get him pardoned were judiciously reported, along with laments that

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"the strong man is now out of jail and the weak one is in."

As one resident very close to the heart of the story told me, "I know Paul and I know he didn't do it—but we'll never know the whole story now."

There was a happy footnote: a newspaper clipping without a date which showed Paul marrying a Norway woman, and his mother standing there proudly. □

## MISMATCHED

Why is it those who love to dance  
Marry those who just aren't hep.  
They go through life as partners,  
Albeit always out of step.

*T. Jewell Collins  
North Waterford*

... page 6 Marguerite Shaw

was seen on Armstrong Circle Theatre, Ford Startime and Phil Silvers specials as well as many commercials.

Marguerite "retired" from Sarah Lawrence for the first time in 1977; after which she and a friend set up a guest house for college students in their home. She continued to work at the college switchboard until her second retirement last year.

Now, she says she keeps busy with gardening and "my job as household engineer, plus studying, reading, crocheting and TV listening. I love the Boston Pops."

Her former colleges have all given her awards: "Who's Who among Bates Alumnae," Westbrook's "Alumna of the Year Award," "The Honor Society Award" from The American University. Her former students remember her warmly, as do those in the audiences who appreciate her talents as an actress and a singer. The musical talents she first learned with her father's band here in Maine.

South Paris should be proud of the energy and achievements of her native daughter, Marguerite Shaw. □

*Next month: A little remembrance of "Shaw's Snappy Syncopators"—Howard Shaw's local danceband of the Roaring Twenties.*

# You don't say

## ONLY TWO

The Clemons family is one of Hiram's oldest. Some of our earliest settlers bore that name.

Jessie Clemons was a descendant who lived in the town in the early 1900's.

He was an expert woodsman and a staunch and respected citizen. If he had a fault it was his aquaphobia. He was deadly afraid to go into any body of water larger than a bath tub.

He could, however, bring himself to fish along the shore. One day he went fishing at Rattlesnake Pond with a couple of contemporaries. His two friends brought along some "liquid bait" in which they frequently indulged. Jessie vigorously refused to drink and his companions became quite upset about it. So to soothe their injured feelings he allowed himself to be coaxed into a rowboat.

Once out in the pond the two friends sought to check out Jessie's phobia by vigorously rocking the boat. And they honestly swore that Jessie was so scared that he jumped out of the boat and walked ashore over the surface of the water. Ever after, the gang around the stove in the general store were wont to affirm that in all time only two people had ever walked on water—Jesus Christ and Jessie Clemons. □

*Raymond Cotton  
Hiram*

## MARCH is Nutrition Month

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# Goings On

## SIGNS OF SPRING

I walked across the hard  
March snow  
To let a part of winter go.  
The pussywillow leaned  
toward spring;  
The pasture brook began to sing.  
Where the garden gate once  
sturdy stood,  
The winds have left but  
weathered wood.  
I find a promise close at hand  
Where signs of spring talk to  
the land.

Ruth Pitts  
Naples

**BitterSweet** would like to feature more Goings On. Your club, group, or organization can be listed free of charge by simply mailing the information to P. O. Box 6, Norway, ME 04268 at least one month prior to the publication date (the first week of each month, March-Dec.) ☐

## ART

**David Walker, Poet:** Rumford Public Library and the Maine State Commission on the Arts & Humanities will sponsor a lecture-demonstration on the poetic process and a reading of Walker's work on Sat, Mar. 7 from 1-3 p.m. in the Public Room. Free.

## FILMS

**International Film Festival:** Sponsored by Maine Humanities Council and University of Southern Maine Cultural Affairs Committee. **CEDDO**, Mar. 5 & 6. A Black African epic from Senegal, 1977, dir. by Ousmane Sembene, this film deals with the political kidnapping of a beautiful princess and the opposition to Moselm expansion. **IN A YEAR OF THIRTEEN MOONS**, Mar. 12 & 13, German, 1979, dir. by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The last days in the doomed life of transsexual Elvira Weishapf. A companion piece to "Maria Braun." **ANGI VERA**, Mar. 19 & 20, Hungarian, 1979, dir. by Pal

Gabor. A startling film about sex and politics in post-war Eastern Europe. **KNIFE IN THE HEAD**, Mar. 26 & 27, German, 1978, dir. by Reinhard Hauff. A mystery-thriller with a unique twist, starring Bruno Ganz. **MY BRILLIANT CAREER**, Apr. 2 & 3, Australian, dir. by Gillian Armstrong. A heroine with an egotistical independence considers giving up her career to be a wife. All films except the Australian are subtitled in English. Thurs. evenings the film is shown at Luther Bonney Auditorium, Portland campus; Fridays at Bailey Auditorium, Gorham campus. Admission \$1.00 U.S.M. students, faculty, staff; \$2.00 general public.

## MUSIC

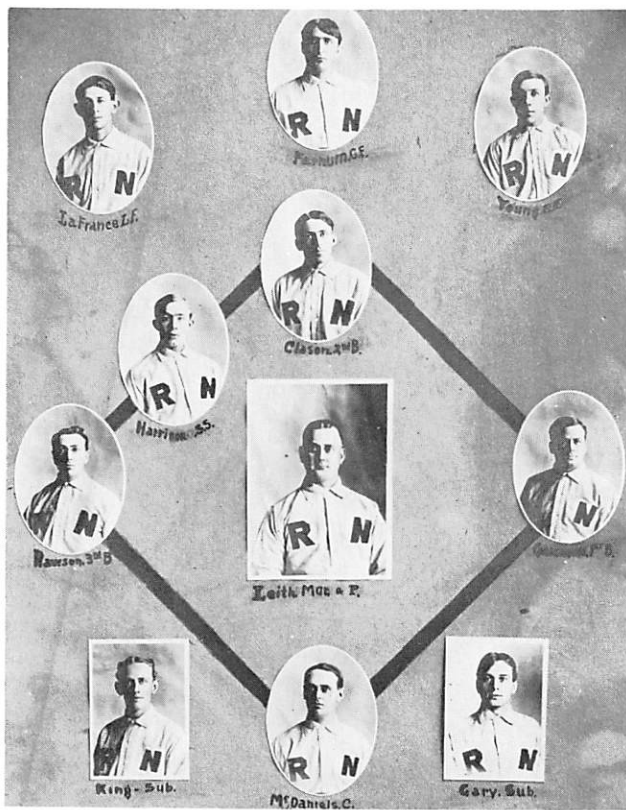
**Portland Choral Arts Society:** will present Guiseppe Verdi's *Requiem* on Weds. Apr. 29 at 7:45 p.m. at City Hall Auditorium, Portland. Also features Portland Symphony Orchestra & Chorus. Admission charged.

## Can You Place It?

The December **Can You Place It?** was identified as the Harrison narrow gauge railroad station by Mid Barber of Denmark and Walter W. Wright of Paris, Me. and Lebanon, N.H.—unfortunately, too late for the January issue.

The January mystery picture was quickly identified by many people as the West Baldwin Grange Hall. Harry K. Eastman of Fryeburg was the first to identify it; also writing were Flora Small of Hiram, Mrs. George Doughty, Sr. and Mrs. Viola Spring of West Baldwin, and Fred Doughty, who said, "many a fine time has happened there." Marion Chamberlain of Brownfield also wrote: "This is the Grange Hall at West Baldwin, Maine. I lived beside it for two years when I was young and go there for a very good baked bean supper every summer, put on by the church and grange."

We are always on the search for more **Can You Place It?** pictures—both old and new. Send any you might be willing to have us copy with a stamped self-addressed envelope and we will return them to you. Our mailing address: P. O. Box 6, Norway, ME 04268.



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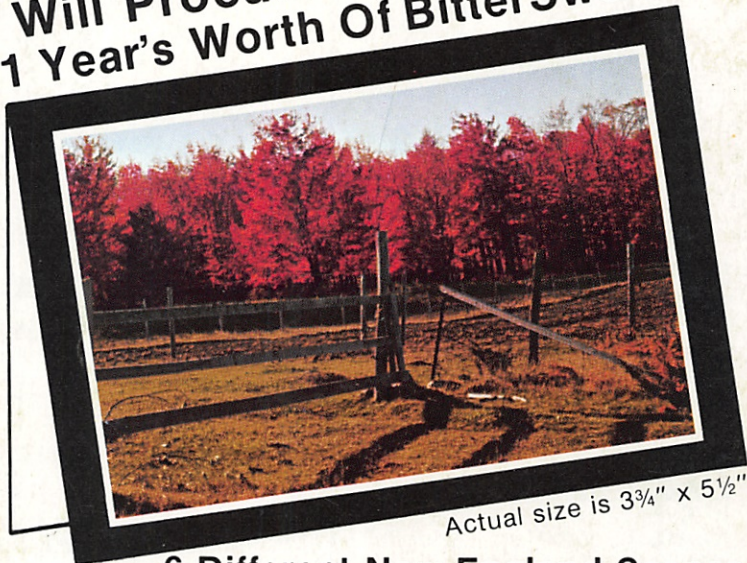
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